AUGUST 1960

Commentary

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SIDNEY HOOK: **PRAGMATISM & THE TRAGIC SENSE OF LIFE**
ASHER BRYNES: **ECONOMICS OF THE FARM PROBLEM**
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Henry Roth's Neglected Masterpiece
LESLIE A. FIEDLER

HENRY ROTH
The Dun Dakotas

THE STUDY OF MAN
Harold Rosenberg: **Community, Values, Comedy**

IN THE COMMUNITY
Milton Himmelfarb: **Some Notes on Jewish Affairs**

CONTROVERSY
Oscar Handlin / Jacob Robinson: **Ethics & Eichmann**

BOOKS IN REVIEW Richard L. Schoenwald George L. Mosse Marshall Cohen Nathan Glazer Lewis Coser Elmer Borklund

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In criticizing my remarks about the Eichmann case last month, Oscar Handlin calls it a "tragic turn of events" that Jews "who profess an interest in an international moral code" nevertheless "defend the right of a Jewish nation to take the law into its own hands." Presumably alluding to my comments in the May issue about Arthur Settel's description of the hanging of seven Nazi war criminals by the American Military Government in 1951, Professor Handlin also deplores the fact that Jews "who are against capital punishment in general" can be found seeking "the execution of those who have wronged their co-religionists." Having taken great pains to make clear that I was not *advocating* the execution of Eichmann or the other Nazi war criminals, but rather explaining why—as a Jew—I could not bring myself to *oppose* such executions (though I am indeed an opponent of capital punishment "in general"), I can only suppose that Professor Handlin is refusing to accept the relevance of the distinction that seems to me so crucial here. Yet if his piece proves anything, it is that this distinction has an even wider application than I at first suggested. "Any Jew," I said in my original statement on the subject, "who so far permits himself to forget what the Nazis were and did as to condemn the executions altogether is committing a kind of violence against his own humanity." I submit that when Professor Handlin uses the word "*wronged*" to describe what the Nazis (and especially Eichmann) did to the Jews, he is precisely permitting himself to forget: surely stronger language would have been generated by an imagination to which the reality of the Nazis was vividly present at the moment of writing. I hope it is unnecessary to emphasize that I am not accusing Professor Handlin of indifference to the fate of Jews. What I am saying, however, is that his letter reveals a tendency that deserves the epithet "tragic" far more than the situation *he* deplores—the tendency to deny the unique and unprecedented and finally incomprehensible character of Nazism. (Even militant Jewish patriots fall victim to this tendency when they try to assimilate the Nazis into the "ordinary" history of anti-Semitic persecutions by comparing Hitler to Haman or the Germans to the Amalekites or—what is worse—by seeing Arab hostility to Israel as a phenomenon of the same order as the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews.) I call this tendency tragic because it seems to me that if the experience of Nazism failed to affect the consciousness of our age any more deeply than the Eichmann case and (in a much less important way) the Rockwell affair indicate that it did, then we have forfeited a chance of salvaging at least a touch of wisdom from all the suffering and horror that Hitler inflicted on the world.

Why should Professor Handlin be so "distressed" when a man confesses that the Nazis have set the limits to his capacity for upholding certain abstract principles? Does he see anything wrong in acknowledging that life can sometimes do violence to one's comfortable ideas about the right and the good and the true? If we wish to speak of tragedy here, oughtn't we rather identify it with the refusal to permit a new and unprepared for experience to complicate and qualify our ideas? Much of what Professor Handlin says about justice is true, except that he seems not to realize that the "generally accepted principles" and "procedures" of justice have proved inadequate for dealing with the Nazis. He praises the Nuremberg trials for observing such

[*continued on page 184*]

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TURKEY—

A Case in Constructive Nationalism

A. V. SHERMAN

THE experience of Turkey in the past decade holds a significance for Asian and Middle Eastern nationalism in general: Turkey in the 1920's was the scene of the first successful "national-modernist" revolution. In fact, Kemal Ataturk succeeded in using the state as the chief instrument of transformation and development with nationalism as the driving force, thus forestalling Communism by his efforts to modernize Turkey's stagnant Oriental economy and petrified social institutions. Since then, Kemalism has become the generic term to describe—in a sense to legitimize—nationalist military dictatorships in other Middle Eastern countries.

The upheaval last May, however, culminating in the army's seizure of power in the name of Kemalism and democracy, has naturally raised the question of whether Turkey is about to follow in the wake of such other successor states of the Ottoman Empire as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Before this question can be answered —that is, before we can assess the implications of the recent coup for Turkey's political future—we must ask what went wrong with her first experiment in parliamentary democracy that began when Menderes took power in 1950; which leads in turn to a consideration of how far Kemalism succeeded in actually modernizing the country.

In order to appreciate why Turkey's first essay in democracy failed, we need to see why it took place at all. Until the late 1940's, a one-party dictatorship seemed to be the most appropriate political framework for the Kemalist regime. The state, as the main hub of Turkish society, not only maintained the army, the police, and the administrative apparatus, it also owned and operated most of the country's industry, banking and finance, public utilities, transport, coal mines, and a good deal of the wholesale trade. The state also provided the chief source of employment and income for the educated class, directly employing some two-thirds of secondary school and university graduates who, in turn, as members of the Republican People's party, provided the regime's main base of political support. (Here it is worth noting that the term "Turk," in our context, for all practical purposes is synonymous with Moslem; it excludes the "minorities," i.e. Jews,

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Greeks, and Armenians. These minorities are very rarely employed by the state: they are concentrated in and form a large part of the private sector of the economy.)

The need for dictatorship was originally accepted by the majority of the educated class on the grounds that the masses were still illiterate and fanatically religious; and that if absolute political freedom were granted, the reactionaries would exploit it to incite the people against reform and progress, dragging Turkey back into the stagnation and chaos from which Kemal had rescued her only just in time to prevent national extinction. The dictatorship was a limited one, in the sense that those who accepted its aims and conventions still had considerable freedom; also, some kinds of individual activity were permitted unchecked, though opposition to the regime was ruthlessly suppressed.

After 1945, when Turkey joined the Western alliance and the Americans began to press for greater constitutional liberties than were foreseen in the original Republican constitution of 1924, the impulse to political reform came from inside the People's party, together with its ally, the intelligentsia. The other classes were politically passive, without aspiration to challenge the bureaucracy's power. Three-quarters of the population was made up of an amorphous peasantry, which confined its resentment of Ataturk's reforms to passive resistance and violence against individuals. The urban working class was small and heterogeneous. Workers in state-owned enterprises and public utilities had security of tenure and something akin to a civil servant mentality. But most of the urban workers were a floating population drawn from the countryside and returning home after a few years: they naturally lacked solidarity. Given the fact that strikes were illegal, all socialist tendencies uniformly banned, and no genuine trade unions tolerated by the Kemalist regime under either Ataturk or his successor, Inonu, it is not perhaps surprising that the Turkish workers failed to produce a real labor movement—legal or illegal.

At the other end of the social scale, the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, as distinct from the numerous and influential professional class, was of equally little consequence. In spite of some progress toward Turkification of industry and commerce since the 1930's, the minorities, who traditionally lack political aspiration or influence, still play a large part in those areas. The Turkish entrepreneurial class itself, with few exceptions, lacks any tradition of political activity, and took no part in pioneering either the industrial or the social revolution. It has largely followed in the wake of the government, on which it remained dependent for markets, credits, licenses, and other facilities. Nor did business circles ever gain any position of consequence inside the Republican party, which remained the preserve of professional politicians, bureaucrats, and army men. Neither did they succeed in taking over the opposition Democratic party—formed by Celal Bayar and Menderes in 1946—that won power in 1950. As for the members of the free professions and unattached intellectuals, few in number compared with their colleagues in the state service, they shared a common background and outlook with the salariat and the officer corps—the groups which had originally formed the hard core of Turkish nationalism and supported Kemal in his rise to power.

The main impetus, then, to democratization resulted from Turkey's close alliance with the West, which from 1945 onward came about, not as a result of ideological affinities, but in reaction to Soviet pressure. Turkish public opinion became increasingly sensitive about the country's anomalous position as a one-party dictatorship within a democratic alliance: it was believed by the Turks that this constituted an obstacle to their full membership in the Western "club." The ruling politicians now discovered that, in the changed mental climate prevailing in

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the late 40's, the defense of dictatorships as being needed to promote social and economic progress was unacceptable—at any rate in the United States, where universal suffrage was held to be universally applicable. Moreover, if Indians, Burmese, and Indonesians were fit for parliamentary democracy, why not the Turks, whose economic and political standards were unquestionably higher? (By now of course the West has had second thoughts about the advisability of introducing parliamentary institutions into backward societies, but this conversion came too late to affect the outcome in Turkey.)

THE changed climate of opinion encouraged a demand for democracy by the younger generation of Kemalist intellectuals, and strengthened the hand of the Democratic party—which, beginning as a dissident faction, had seemed to guarantee that political competition would remain within the Kemalist conventions and would not shatter the unity of the educated classes held necessary to restrain the reactionary and fanatical instincts of the masses. The new alignment included both liberal and die-hard elements, brought together by a combination of personal and political factors.

Another effect of Western influence was to boost the level of economic aspiration. Kemalism had traditionally given little thought to raising rural living standards, but had concentrated on industrialization, education, and military development, leaving agriculture largely to its own devices. However, the primitive living standards of the peasantry had begun to seem intolerable, and everyone agreed that it was the state's duty to do something about them. Electoral competition between the two parties spread these aspirations more widely among strata of the population whose attitudes toward living standards had up to then been quite fatalistic. The Democratic party promised the most: of course, higher living standards for the peasants; full employment and higher wages to urban workers; dismantling of economic controls, contraction of the state sector, and wider opportunities for private enterprise, as in the West. At the same time it promised the intellectuals that the political freedoms grudgingly and tentatively granted by President Inonu would be made absolute. On this platform the Democrats swept to power in 1950 and began the ten-year rule that has now collapsed in chaos.

The attempt to honor all these and other contradictory promises simultaneously was bound indeed to come to grief. The new government's first dilemma arose from the huge centralized governing machine it inherited, in which political and economic power were combined. To adapt the country to multi-party democracy would have entailed drastic reforms, involving the "unscrambling" of party and state, and the de-politicization of the state sector which was run very much like any other government department. The Democratic leaders, however, regarded the existing machinery both as a handy tool for implementing their economic and social program, and as their main instrument of patronage and political power. They therefore enlarged the machine further, introducing their own party cadres and supporters wherever possible. As a result they more and more came to resemble the pre-1950 Republican party, while the latter, under ex-President Inonu's patient leadership, played the part of a democratic opposition in a manner which was to win it growing esteem.

The Menderes government's second dilemma stemmed directly from the demagogy of its economic program. Like that of most underdeveloped countries, the Turkish economy could not generate enough capital to employ its rapidly expanding labor force and raise over-all productivity even while living standards remained low. Turkey's natural increase is one of the highest in the world, nearly 3 per cent yearly. During the last twenty-five years her population has grown from

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14 to 27 million, and is still increasing at the rate of three-quarters of a million a year. Ataturk's industrialization policy had been carried out largely at the expense of the countryside whose limited production and purchasing power held back industrial development. Even granted generous foreign aid, very careful selection of investments was called for, and the desirability of any immediate increase in consumption was not evident, particularly since there was no substantial pressure for higher living standards from the masses themselves.

However, the elation of victory combined with expectations of foreign aid to induce delusions of economic grandeur in Menderes and his entourage. They plunged Turkey into a vast program of industrial investment and public works, simultaneously raising rural living standards by abolishing taxes and inflating the prices paid by the state's agricultural purchasing agencies. Since economic planning was rejected, both on ideological grounds and because Menderes found it temperamentally uncongenial, the allocation of resources was directed mainly by political considerations and emotional bias. Industries were chosen and sited largely according to their vote-catching potentialities, and large-scale projects, which locked up considerable capital for long periods without giving any return, were preferred to more modest and productive ones. Thus the government tripled the country's beet-sugar refining capacity, though existing capacity was under-utilized, largely because the factories, sited in small towns, gave employment and patronage. As a result, new factories in areas like Erzerum had to be supplied by a long railway haul from the hinterland of existing factories, decreasing their production and raising costs all around. Dam building was pushed ahead out of all proportion to complementary investment in power, irrigation, and drainage. Artificially high prices paid for wheat led to over-expansion of the wheat acreage at the expense of crop diversification, and entailed government wheat exports at a heavy loss.

To finance these policies, the government borrowed abroad and created new money. Chronic inflation and balance-of-payments difficulties resulted. Menderes' efforts to remedy these symptoms by stringent controls inevitably led to waste, corruption, further distortion of the economic structure, a decline in economic activity, and discouragement of private investment —foreign or domestic. To compensate for this, the government further expanded its own investment and public works' programs, thereby increasing the preponderance of the public sector it had earlier promised to cut down, and aggravating both inflation and balance-of-payments difficulties. In short, Turkey invoked the typical nemesis suffered by overambitious but underdeveloped countries.

MENDERES persevered with these policies so long as he could beg or borrow the necessary funds. He was encouraged by well-meant but misguided circles in the West which sympathized with his "heroic approach" to economics. It was only in 1958 that the United States, British, and West German governments finally forced him to undertake economic reforms by refusing to grant any further aid until he did so. But by then the political damage had been done, and the "deflationary cure"—which entailed devaluation and price increases—proved as painful to important sections of the population (particularly the salary-earners) as the preceding inflation had done. By then too, the government's obviously inept economic policies evoked growing criticism from the press and the opposition. Menderes met it with savage press laws, restriction on the opposition's activities, and increasingly bitter attacks on the record of previous administrations, not only for the period after Ataturk's death in 1938, but for the previous decade as well. This attitude caused his support among the educated classes to decline sharply, and the

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liberal wing of his party—with about a tenth of the deputies but a larger proportion of the intellectuals—broke away to form the "Freedom party," later merging with the Republican party to create a unified opposition.

As his support among the educated middle class declined, Menderes turned increasingly to the backward sections of the population for support, whittling down the secularist reforms in practice, and making overtures to the Moslem clergy which had remained in sullen opposition throughout the Kemalist regime. His concessions, such as permitting the call to prayer in Arabic and even the use of amplifiers by the village mosque, introducing religious instruction into the schools, and slowing the drive to emancipate women and send village girls to school, may seem slight enough to the Western reader. To the educated Turks, brought up in a spirit of militant secularism and the conviction that religious conservatism lay at the root of Turkey's backwardness, these measures appeared as treason to Kemal's reforms and a threat to the established order. Many officers and civil servants who were prepared to stomach Menderes' heavy-handedness and forgive his economic ineptitude were turned against him by concessions to religious reaction.

The government also tried to whip up crude nationalist feeling over the Cyprus issue. The results, which included savage riots in Istanbul and a decline in Turkey's international prestige, further increased public anatagonism toward the government. Menderes was fond of saying that he did not care what the intellectuals of Istanbul thought so long as the people supported him, but experience has shown that in a country like Turkey the opinion of the educated classes—who officer the army, staff the bureaucracy and the universities, and run the press—is decisive. When these are reasonably united and determined, the attitude of the peasantry and the urban proletariat cannot decide the issue. Recognizing that he would lose the 1961 elections if the opposition was allowed even minimal freedom of activity, Menderes attempted to establish a virtual dictatorship. The majority of his party continued to support him, partly from personal interest, partly from hatred of the Republican party, partly from fear that they had gone too far to withdraw. But in the face of serious opposition by the officer corps who had hitherto kept out of politics, the regime finally crumbled. The army had endeavored to keep out of politics, but when Menderes destroyed the last of the conventions by imposing martial law and attempting to purge the High Command, the officers took power. They did so after the students—perhaps taking their cue from South Korea—had rioted in Ankara and Istanbul, with several dead and injured; after the rector of Istanbul University had been beaten up by the police; and after Menderes had begun to enlist the scum of Istanbul—the unemployed shantytown *Lumpenproletariat*—into a paid bodyguard for use against students and opposition leaders. There were rumors that the aged Inonu, at seventy-six still a vigorous opposition leader, was in personal danger. At this point the army stepped in and made an end of the counter-revolution.

AT FIRST sight the aftermath of the coup looks dangerously similar to developments in the Arab world, but comparisons can be misleading. The breakdown of Turkish parliamentarism has not seriously affected public belief in the desirability of democracy. The argument that Turkey's traditions make her unfit for self-government is overwhelmingly rejected on the grounds that twenty-five years of Kemalist "dictatorship by consent" prepared the Turks for democracy. In any case, the courageous resistance to Menderes' dictatorial pretensions by the press, the intellectuals, and the students have shown that a return to dictatorship is now unlikely. It is also noteworthy that these developments have not given any foothold to Commu-

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nism, anti-Westernism, or "positive neutralism," as some observers had predicted. Kemalism—that is, secular constructive nationalism—has succeeded in retaining its hold over the loyalties and imagination of two generations of Turks. This devotion, which has to be seen to be believed, is one of Ataturk's most striking achievements and is certainly unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries. It goes much further in explaining Communism's failure to strike root in Turkey than does the brutality of police measures—after all, the police did not help Menderes to keep power, nor have they prevented the spread of Communism in neighboring countries.

THE coup was not the work of a group of officers motivated by dislike of the regime's underlying purpose, or jealous of ruling class privileges, as in several Arab states. It was carried out by the officer corps as a whole. The latter is an integral part of the ruling stratum with which it shares a common family, educational, and social background, and common values, since modern Turkey is largely the work of the Turkish army. Its intervention was canvassed and welcomed by the majority of the educated classes in order to prevent a reactionary dictatorship. There is no question of the army's "capturing" Turkish society as happened in several Arab states, where it stepped into the vacuum caused by the disintegration of the ruling class or the withdrawal of colonial authority. The most distinguished intellectuals—professors, judges, economists, and lawyers—are actively collaborating with the army in administering the country and preparing a new constitution. These developments reflect certain fundamental differences between Kemalism and the newer forms of military rule emerging in Arab countries, of which Nasserism is the most characteristic. Kemalism—and the Young Turk movement from which it originally stemmed—took shape during the early part of the 20th century when constitutional democracy was still the goal of reformers and nationalists. The Western powers were also the most advanced and the most powerful militarily. For Ataturk, therefore, France and Germany were models to be aimed at, while dictatorship was a temporary expedient. The very lack of organized, political opposition to his rule absolved him from the need to search for ideological justification at the time. Kemalism therefore remained in favor of parliamentary democracy as a matter of principle. Its ideology has always been Jacobinical, not fascist, and like the Jacobins it envisaged dictatorship as a shortcut to full self-government.

Turkey has remained immune from political anti-Westernism for a variety of reasons. In the first place, the Turkish ruling stratum had an imperial outlook. This made them defense-minded, and caused them to welcome NATO and military aid, which gained the West popularity instead of creating resentment, as it did in other Middle Eastern countries. Secondly, Turkish nationalism took shape before the division of the world into hostile Soviet and Western blocs.

The Turks could have no grudge against the "West" as such, since they had formed part of the system of European alliances, and whenever they were embroiled with one European power they were being supported by another. Thirdly, though religiously inspired anti-Westernism is present among the backward masses of the population, any attempt to make political capital out of it—as has been done in Persia, Iraq, and Egypt—has been ruthlessly suppressed because of the political threat involved. Lastly, Washington has by now learned enough from its earlier mishaps to avoid being directly identified with an unpopular regime, particularly since it is evident that the new rulers—like the Republican party with whom the officers clearly sympathize—are committed to the Western orientation.

Turks are sufficiently mature to seek the cause of failures and shortcomings at home, instead of immediately blaming

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them on the West, or foreigners and foreign influences of one sort or another. Since the army took power, serious discussion has been going on over the causes of the regime's degeneration into personal dictatorship only a few years after it so auspiciously assumed power. So far, army spokesmen, members of the new government, and the press, have avoided the error of trying to explain events primarily in terms of the personality of a few leaders; instead they have sought the underlying defects in the system itself. There is wide agreement on the need to adapt the constitution to the needs of a multi-party democracy. Measures already proposed include the depoliticizing of ministries and state economic agencies, the drawing of clearer boundaries between political and state-directed activities, the creation of a senate, and the granting of a check over legislative activities to the High Court (on the U.S. model) in order to prevent the "tyranny of the majority." In general, the new regime has shown awareness that the over-centralization of political and economic power is a threat to freedom, and that where such centralization cannot be avoided, effective safeguards must be created.

THE former government's appeal to Moslem reaction, and the undoubted support it gained among certain sections of the population, has brought about a greater realization that Turkey must do much better in eliminating rural backwardness if she is to succeed in maintaining free institutions. Ataturk regarded rural backwardness as something that could wait treatment until after the urban sector had caught up with Europe, but it has become apparent that the growing gap between town and country threatened his achievements. In Eastern and Central Anatolia the majority of the population still lives and thinks in much the same way as it did five centuries ago. Most peasants are still illiterate; the only real representative of authority and enlightenment at the village level is the schoolmaster, himself village-born, with a few years of schooling and perfunctory training in a teacher's institute. He is inevitably isolated in a huge sea of apathy and prejudice, hard put to it to counter the influence of the Moslem clergy and backward village notables. Worse still, in about a third of the Turkish villages there is no school or schoolmaster at all. Religion continues to dominate village life. Many, perhaps most, of the village and small-town women to this day go veiled from head to foot in the heavy black *carsaf*—not only the elderly and middle-aged women but quite young ones, to judge by their gait and the infants they carry. Despite Ataturk's having abolished religious marriage and divorce and forbade polygamy, many villagers still regulate their lives by the Moslem code which allows them to practice polygamy and easy divorce and avoid civil marriage. This is obvious from the serious "bastardy problem": large numbers of conscripts whose first contact with the authorities occur when they are called up for military service turn out to be illegitimate according to civil law, though they are legitimate enough in the eyes of the villagers.

The pathological sexual jealousy institutionalized in traditional Moslem custom, fanatical resistance to innovations, illiteracy and apathy, combine with economic backwardness to create something of a self-perpetuating obstacle to progress. State intervention in its present form has only managed to scratch the surface: its impetus is drastically slowed down by the great distances and the organizational hiatus between the authorities and the village. If Kemalism is to compete successfully with Communism during the next decade or two, it will have to find some more effective way of penetrating the countryside politically and ideologically, and of dominating it from inside, as Chinese and other Communist parties have. There is no reason why the Turkish ruling elite should not succeed once they really

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set their mind to it. They have a cadre of idealists, a strong central authority, and a growing surplus of young intellectuals and semi-intellectuals now being turned out by the educational system whom it will be increasingly difficult to absorb into state employment and who sincerely desire to serve their country in the most useful way possible. Above all, Turkey's educated classes have the will to progress toward democracy and a sense of responsibility for the nation's future.

THOUGH observers have looked for similarities between Kemalism and Nasserism, closer examination shows them to be almost diametrical opposites. For one thing, Arab nationalism took shape when the balance of world forces had changed fundamentally from the pattern of the 1920's, the period during which Kemalism became fixed in its essential outlines. But Nasserism developed when liberalism in the West had already passed the apogee of its influence. The Arab intellectuals were predisposed against democracy both because they identified it with Britain and France, and because the parliamentary regimes hastily thrust onto them by the Western powers lacked a firm enough economic and social basis to do credit to democracy. The Egyptian grievances against Britain—which are not entirely without justification—are reinforced by what could be described as a "grievance against history" and a national inferiority complex. Nasser's writings and speeches, for example, are full of bitter complaints at crimes committed against Egypt by foreigners—Moslems and Christians—during the past two thousand years or more, and a pressing desire to compensate for this by acts of defiance, and to show Egypt's international importance—if only in nuisance value. This explains why, as Western influence declines, Nasser's anti-Westernism increases. Whereas Kemal decided at the outset to cut Turkey's losses and renounce both Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanism, in order not to distract the Turks from more constructive tasks at home, Nasser has spread his net wider and wider, claiming leadership of the whole Arab world, Islam, and Africa, and busily conferring with heads of state in four continents. His fervently ideological approach, which contrasts so strongly with Turkish pragmatism, also has historical roots. Kemal and the Young Turks belonged to a ruling elite with a sense of legitimacy. They revolted against the Sultan, having become convinced of the need to sacrifice the apex of the pyramid in order to preserve the "Establishment" and its national basis. Kemal adopted state capitalism because it was the only available instrument for industrializing Turkey, not because he had any fixed ideas about economics in general; he always left room for private enterprise to develop at a later date—if it could do so and appeared to be in the national interest—and never felt obliged to adopt an attitude for or against capitalism in general. Nasser and his contemporaries, by contrast, began as "have-nots," for whom ideology was necessary in order to legitimize their seizure and retention of power: hence they have made pan-Arabism, anti-Westernism, and anti-liberalism articles of faith, pledging Egypt to state control and prohibiting all parties except the National Union for all the foreseeable future. These ideological attitudes reduce Nasser's effective freedom of maneuver* and embroil him with other Arab states and the West, irrespective of Egypt's interests, or even his own regime's.

Behind Nasser's restlessness and his impulse to concentrate on foreign policy, is the really dismal social and economic situation at home. For all its problems, Turkey is a paradise compared with Egypt. Its land-water population ratio is quite satisfactory, and from the technical point of view there is ample room for increasing farm output without unduly large investments, and for employing a larger farm

* The sustained violence of Arab broadcasting in a couple of dozen languages is not without psychological significance.

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population if necessary. Though living conditions are low by Western standards, there is none of that miserable hopeless poverty and unemployment which exists in Egypt, where people really go short of bread and barefooted. In Egypt and other Arab lands where the peasants and urban proletariat are poorer, more ignorant, more fanatical and physically weaker than in Turkey, and where the intellectual proletariat or surplus white-collar workers are a real social problem, the prevailing hopelessness makes it tempting for the rulers to seek solace in foreign policies—even if these amount largely to sheer verbal aggression.

THE differences between Kemalism and Nasserism show signs of becoming self-perpetuating. While the Turks actively seek means of decentralizing their society in order to give economic and social life greater autonomy, Nasser steadily moves in the opposite direction. The three main transmission lines for societal power are now united in his hands alone: the army, the state, and the National Union, which is taking on all the characteristics of a totalitarian state-party, used to supervise and reinforce state power at all levels. The government is constantly increasing its share of total national resources, of which it already controls more than half. Besides nationalizing foreign property and businesses owned by resident members of minorities, and creating new state-capitalist enterprises, Nasser has nationalized Egyptian enterprises such as the Misr group of industries and public utilities which were set up by Egyptian businessmen in order to hasten Egypt's economic development: men who acted with a sense of great public responsibility, and had an excellent record in the treatment of their workers. The National Union has likewise taken over all newspapers, which were already quite subservient to the regime. Such concentration of power helps to bring Egypt closer to the Soviet bloc while embroiling Nasser still further with the Western democracies. In order to retain his ascendancy inside the Arab world he is forced to gain victories against the West and Israel —if only paper ones—and in turn he becomes more dependent on Soviet backing. This constant state of political excitement has whetted Arab appetites from Baghdad to Rabat, making the Arab leaders the prisoners of their own policies. In Turkey, on the other hand, four decades of Kemalism have formed a climate of opinion where an adventurist foreign policy is liable to earn more disapproval than applause in the circles that count—as Menderes discovered when he tried to make capital out of the Cyprus issue.

In short, though Nasserism is as "nationalist" as Kemalism, it is quite a different kind of nationalism, definable more easily by what it is against than what it is for. In time of course, Nasserism may mature, but it may equally become more adventurist, as other revolutionary governments have done. There is certainly no basis for the facile hope that the West can somehow encourage Nasser and other Arab dictators to become Kemals just by overlooking their anti-social behavior and pleading with them to accept economic aid. Turkish nationalism, unlike the Arab variant, is based on a drive of rational self-interest.

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LESLIE A. FIEDLER

Henry Roth's Neglected Masterpiece

After the publication in 1935 of his first and only novel, Call It Sleep, HENRY ROTH *retired completely from the literary scene until last year when his parable, "At Times in Flight," appeared in* COMMENTARY *(July 1959). Asked to write a memoir of his years as a poultry farmer in Augusta, Maine, Mr. Roth produced another parable, "The Dun Dakotas," which we publish here along with* LESLIE A. FIEDLER'S *revaluation of* Call It Sleep. *Mr. Fiedler is the author of* An End to Innocence *and* Love and Death in the American Novel. *A new edition of* Call It Sleep *will be issued in the fall by the Pageant Book Co.*

IT WOULD not be quite true to say that Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* went unnoticed when it appeared in 1935. One contemporary reviewer at least was willing to call it "a great novel" and to hope that it might win the Pulitzer Prize, "which," that reviewer added mournfully, "it never will." It never did, the prize going instead to H. L. Davis's *Honey in the Horn,* which was also the Harper Prize Novel of the year and was even touted by Robert Penn Warren in the *Southern Review*—then still being subsidized by Huey Long. Not only the Southern Agrarians were looking elsewhere, however, when Roth's single book was published; almost everyone seemed to have his eye on his own preferred horizon, on which he was pretending to find his own preferred rising star.

The official "proletarian" party was busy hailing Clara Weatherwax for a desolately enthusiastic tract disguised as fiction and called *Marching! Marching! "Marching! Marching!"*—runs the jacket blurb—"is the winner of *The New Masses* contest for a novel on an American Proletarian theme, conducted jointly by *The New Masses* and the John Day Company —the first contest of the kind ever held." It was also the last such contest, partly, one hopes, because of the flagrant badness of the winner (the climax of Miss Weatherwax's book runs as follows: ". . . some of us thinking *Jeez! Bayonets! Machine Guns! They got gas masks on those bags around their necks on their chests—gas!* and others *For God's sake, you guys, don't shoot us! Come over to our side. Why should you kill us? We are your brothers"*) —but chiefly, one suspects, because a basic change in the political line of the Comintern instituted in 1936 led to the substitution of the Popular Front novel for the Proletarian one.

John Steinbeck, the most sensitive recorder of that shift, was to publish his resolutely proletarian *In Dubious Battle* in 1936, but this reflects a lag demanded by the exigencies of publishing. *The Grapes of Wrath,* which represents the full-scale political-sentimental novel of the last half of the 30's, did not reach print until 1939. Meanwhile, Dos Passos and Farrell, the most ambitious talents of the first part of the decade, were closing out their accounts by putting between the covers of single volumes those fat trilogies

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(*Studs Lonigan* actually appeared in 1935; *U.S.A.* was that year in its last stages) which seemed for a while to the literary historians the great achievements of the period. And at the same time, Hemingway was preparing for his own brief fling at being a "proletarian" author, improbably publishing a section of *To Have and Have Not* in *Cosmopolitan* magazine during 1934.

To the more dogged proletarian critics, Henry Roth seemed beside Weatherwax or Dos Passos, Farrell or even Hemingway woefully "poetic" and uncommitted. "He pleads [prefers?] diffuse poetry to the social light . . ." the reviewer for the *New Republic* complained, adding rather obscurely but surely unfavorably that Roth "pinkly through the flesh sees the angry sunset." Actually, there was some point in chiding Roth for not writing a "socially conscious" book, since his dedication to Eda Lou Walton (his teacher, sponsor, and friend, who had identified herself clearly enough with the proletarian cause) indicated a declaration if not of allegiance at least of general sympathy. Certainly Roth did not take his stand outside of the world bounded by the *New Masses,* the *Nation,* and the *New Republic,* as, say, did John Peale Bishop, whose *Act of Darkness* was also published in 1935, or Thomas Wolfe, whose *Of Time and the River* was just then thrilling the adolescent audience for whom he had rediscovered *Weltschmerz* in *Look Homeward, Angel.* Nor was Roth willing to launch the sort of satirical attack on social commitment undertaken only a year later by another young Jewish writer, Daniel Fuchs, in *Homage to Blenholt.*

He was ideologically in much the same position as Nathanael West, whose *A Cool Million* appeared in the same year with *Call It Sleep,* and whose technique, different as it was, also baffled the official "proletarians." Both had reached intellectual maturity inside a world of beliefs which they felt no impulse to deny but which they did not find viable in their art. West died inside that world and Roth apparently still inhabits it insofar as he retains any connection with literary life at all. At any rate, looking back from 1960 and the poultry farm in Maine to which he has finally withdrawn, that is the world he remembers. "Is Yaddo still functioning?" he recently asked an interviewer. "Whatever happened to Horace Gregory and Ben Belitt?" There is a half-comic pathos in the questions and the continuing faith from which they spring that a literary movement to which Roth never quite belonged must still somehow be going on.

But in Roth's novel itself there is little enough manifest social consciousness. Though his scene is Brownsville and the East Side of New York just after the turn of the century and his protagonists are a working-class Jewish immigrant family, there is small sense of an economic struggle. Jobs are gotten and lost because of psychological quirks and dark inner compulsions; money does not corrupt nor does poverty redeem; no one wants to rise like David Levinsky or fears to fall like the harried protagonists of Theodore Dreiser. If there is a class struggle and a revolutionary movement, these are revealed only in an overheard scrap of soapbox oratory at the climax of the novel, where they seem singularly irrelevant to the passion and suffering of Roth's child hero who is living through that climax.

> "In 1789, in 1848, in 1871, in 1905, he who has anything to save will enslave us anew! Or if not enslave will desert us when the red cock crows! Only the laboring poor, only the masses embittered, bewildered, betrayed, in the day the red cock crows, can free us!"

But even this prophecy uttered out of a "pale, gilt-spectacled, fanatic face," is turned into a brutal sexual jest, recast in light of the obsession which rides the book, its protagonist, and its author. "How many times'll your red cock crow, Pete, befaw y'gives up? T'ree?" asks a mocking Irish voice from the sidelines.

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Perhaps it is this obsessive transformation of all experience into equivocations based on a hated and feared sexuality which put off the kind of reader who might have been expected to hail the kind of book Roth actually wrote. That the *New Masses* critics deplored him and the Southern Agrarians scarcely registered his existence is, after all, to be expected; nor is it proper to feel dismay over the yellowing lists of best-sellers in old newspapers, carefully documented testimony to what the largest audience was reading in 1935 *instead* of Roth. For some the whimsy, Anglophile or pseudo-Oriental, of James Hilton (both *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* and *Lost Horizon* topped the lists) seemed the specific demanded by the pangs of the Great Depression, while others found tranquility in the religiosity of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* or in Mary Pickford's *Why Not Try God?* For those less serious or more chic, there was the eunuchoid malice and sentimentality of Alexander Woollcott's *While Rome Burns;* and the most nearly invisible audience of all (furtive high school boys standing at the circulating library racks in candy stores and their older sisters behind the closed doors of their bedrooms) were reading Donald Henderson Clarke's *Millie* and *Louis Beretti*—the demi-pornography which no library would think of stocking twenty-five years later.

But what of those specifically interested in Jewish literature in the United States, those who, picking up a first novel by a twenty-seven-year-old New Yorker, thought of Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* or remembered Abraham Cahan's breakthrough to the rich disorderly material of Jewish American life? There is surely no more Jewish book among American novels. Though its young hero, David Schearl, for instance, goes to public school, that Gentile area of experience is left shadowy, unrealized. Only his home and the *cheder* and the streets between become real places, as only Yiddish and Hebrew and the poor dialects of those to whom English is an alien tongue are rendered as real languages. And yet those presumably looking for the flowering of a rich and satisfactory Jewish American literature were not moved to applaud.

Some of them, on the contrary, protested against the unloveliness of Roth's ghetto images, the vulgarity and poverty of the speech he recorded—as if he had invented them maliciously. "Doggedly smeared with verbal filthiness," one such critic wrote. "*Call It Sleep* is by far the foulest picture of the East Side that has yet appeared." It is, of course, the typical, the expected response to the serious writer by the official spokesmen of the community out of which he comes. Yet there was in Roth a special kind of offensiveness, capable of stirring a more than conventional reaction; for the real foulness of his book is rendered not directly but through the consciousness of an extraordinarily acute and sensitive boy of seven or eight. Its vulgarity, that is to say, is presented as *felt* vulgarity, grossness assailing a sensibility with no defenses against it.

THE technique of *Call It Sleep* is contrived to make manifest at every moment that its real subject is not so much abomination in the streets as that abomination in the mind. Aside from a prelude, in which the arrival of David and his mother in America is objectively narrated, and a section toward the book's end which blends into a Joycean rhapsody the sounds of a score of city voices as overheard by some omniscient Listener—the whole substance of the novel is presented as what happens inside the small haunted head of David. It is only through him that we know the dark cellar swarming with rats whose door he must pass on his way in or out of the warm sanctuary of his home; the rage and guilt of his paranoid father or that father's impotence and fantasies of being cuckolded; his mother's melancholy, and her soft, unfulfilled sexuality; the promise of her body and the way in

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which it is ogled by others; the fact of sex in general as pollution, the very opposite of love. For David, the act by which he was generated is an unmitigated horror (in a dark closet, reeking of mothballs, he is initiated by a crippled girl, her braces creaking as she embraces him, "Between the legs. Who puts id in is de poppa. De poppa's god de petzel. You de poppa"); and he longs for a purity he cannot find in his world, a fire, a flame to purify him from his iniquity as he has learned in *cheder* Isaiah was once purified.

No book insists more on the distance between the foulness man lives and the purity he dreams; but none makes more clear how deeply rooted that dream is in the existence which seems to contradict it. It is, perhaps, this double insight which gives to Roth's book a Jewish character, quite independent of the subject matter with which he happens to deal. Certainly, it reveals his kinship to Nathanael West, also a novelist of the 30's, whose relationship to his own Jewishness is much more equivocal than Roth's, but who quotes in his earliest book an observation of Doughty's about the nature of Semites in general which illuminates his own work as well as Roth's: the Semite stands in dung up to his eyes, but his brow touches the heavens. Indeed, in Jewish American fiction from Abraham Cahan to Philip Roth, that polarity and tension are present everywhere, the Jew mediating between dung and God, as if his eternal function were to prove that man is most himself not when he turns first to one then to the other—but when he touches both at once. And who can project the awareness of this more intensely and dramatically than the child, the Jewish child?

It is possible to imagine many reasons for Roth's retreating to childhood from adult experience; for retreat it does seem in the light of his second withdrawal, after the publication of a single book, into the silence in which he has persisted until now. To have written such a book and no other is to betray some deep trouble not only in finding words but in loving the life one has lived enough to *want* to find words for it. A retreat from all that 1935 meant to Roth: from the exigencies of adult sexuality and political commitment alike—this is what *Call It Sleep* seems to the retrospective insight of 1960. The book begins in 1907, and though it jumps quickly some five years, never quite reaches the year of the Russian Revolution (the roster of splendid betrayals listed by the street-corner speaker stops at 1905) and the vagaries of Leninism-Stalinism; just as in coming to a close in a boy's eighth year it stops safely short of the point where "playing bad" becomes an act that can end in deflowering or pregnancy. In its world before the falls of puberty and the October Revolution, one can remember 1905 and Mama—play out the dream of the apocalypse and the Oedipal triangle in all naivety.

Cued by whatever fears, Roth's turning to childhood enables him to render his story as dream and nightmare, fantasy and myth—to escape the limits of that realism which makes of other accounts of ghetto childhood documents rather than poetry. In its own time *Call It Sleep* was occasionally compared to Farrell's *Young Lonigan,* but one cannot conceive of such a foreword to Roth's book as that written for Farrell's by "Frederic M. Thrasher, Associate Professor of Education, New York University, Author of *The Gang.*" Roth's book aspires not to sociology but to theology; it is finally and astonishingly a religious book, though this fact even its latest admiring critics tend to ignore or underplay. Only in the account of a child's experience could a protégé of Eda Lou Walton (it would have been another matter if he had been sponsored by Mary Pickford) have gotten away with a religious resolution to a serious novel about ghetto life; and it was to a child's experience that he was canny enough to turn. An evasion of responsibility? A strategic

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device of great subtlety? It is not necessary to decide.

David Schearl, at any rate, is portrayed not only as a small boy and a Jew but also as a "mystic," a naive adept visited by visions he scarcely understands until a phrase from the sixth chapter of Isaiah illuminates for him his own improbable prophetic initiation. Having just burned the leaven of the year in preparation for the Passover ("All burned black. See God, I was good? Now only white Matzohs are left"), David sits watching the play of light on the river and is transported ("His spirit yielded, melted into light . . . . Brighter than day . . . Brighter"). But he is awakened from his ecstasy by the tooting of a barge ("Funny little lights all gone. Like when you squeeze too hard on a toilet . . ."), thrust back into darkness until two Gentile hoodlums persuade him to drop a strip of zinc down into the third rail of a trolley line and he feels that in the dark bowels of the earth he has discovered the source of all light ("And light, unleashed, terrific light bellowed out of iron lips"). This light he identifies with the burning coal that cleansed the unclean lips of Isaiah, though his rabbi mocks him ("Fool! Go beat your head on a wall! God's light is not between car-tracks")—and in his joy he wets his pants.

For better or worse, the prophetic poetry reduced to an exercise learned by rote and beaten into unwilling boys has come alive in David, delivered him from fear so that he can climb the darkest stairway untroubled. ("Gee! Look! Look! Is a light . . . Ain't really there. Inside my head. Better is inside. . . .") Released a little from the warm bondage that binds him to his mother, he can climb now even to the roof of his house, where he meets for the first time the Gentile boy, Leo, a twelve-year-old seducer and eater of forbidden foods, beside whose absolute freedom David's limited release seems slavery still. And in Leo's house he finds new images for the inner light, the purifying flame, in a portrait of Jesus with the Burning Heart and a box bearing the symbolic fish, the name GOD. For the rosary that box contains, he agrees to introduce Leo to his sluttish cousin Esther, whose grimy favors Leo finally wins in the cellar beneath her mother's candy store.

As Leo and Esther squeal and pant in the darkness of one cellar shed, David crouches in another trying to exact light from the holy beads for which he has betrayed his family, his Jewishness, his very desire for cleanliness.

> Past drifting bubbles of grey and icy needles of grey, below a mousetrap, a cogwheel, below a step and a dwarf with a sack upon his back . . . sank the beads, gold figure on a cross swinging slowly . . . At the floor of the vast pit of silence glimmered the round light, pulsed and glimmered like a coin.
>
> —Touch it! Touch it! Drop!

But the light eludes his efforts; and the other two, who have performed the act of darkness at the very moment he sought the light, emerge blaming each other as they are discovered by Esther's sister. "Tell 'er wut I wuz doin', kid," Leo blusters. "Yuh jew hewhs! We wuz hidin' de balonee– Yaa! Sheenee!"

AFTER such a denouement, nothing is possible for David but a plunge into hysteria, a hysteria which overcomes him as he is rereading the passage about the calling of Isaiah, betrays him into telling to his *rebbe* a story compounded half of his father's delusions, dimly perceived, and half of certain reminiscences of his mother, ill understood: his mother is not his *real* mother, he is a bastard, son of a goyish organist in an old country church etc., etc. This fantasy the *rebbe* hastens to carry to David's home, arriving a moment before the horrified parents of Esther appear with their own scandal. And David, overwhelmed by guilt and fear, offers to his father a whip, grovels at his feet, the rosary falling from his pocket as if to testify to the truth of his illegitimacy, his

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contaminated blood. At this point, he must run for his life, his father's long rage at last fulfilled, presumably justified; and he runs where he must, toward God in the dark cleft, to the third rail, the coal of fire that can take away iniquity.

He snatches a ladle from beside a milk pail and flees to an obbligato of city voices, which from the girders of a half-finished building, a warehouse, a bar, a poker table speak with unclean lips of lust and greed, hatred and vengefulness. Only David dreams of a consummation that will transcend and redeem the flesh, finally thrusts the metal he bears between the black lips of the tracks and the awful lightning is released, his body shaken by ineffable power, and his consciousness all but obliterated. Yet his intended sacrifice redeems no one, merely adds a new range of ambiguity to the chorus in which one voice blasphemes against the faith of another and all against love. Himself dazzled, the reader hears again certain phrases he has before only half understood, listens again, for instance, to the bar-room voice that mocked the street-corner orator, "How many times'll your red cock crow, Pete, befaw y'gives up? T'ree?"—notices the "three," the name "Pete," and remembers the other Peter who, three times before the cock crow, denied his Rabbi.

In the interplay of ironies and evasions the final meaning of the failed sacrifice, the private apocalypse (the boy does not die; the world is not made clean; only his parents are rejoined more in weariness than affection over his bed) is never made quite clear, only the transcendence of that meaning, its more than natural character. Turning the final pages of Roth's book, one realizes suddenly how in the time of the Great Depression all the more serious fictionists yearned in secret to touch a religious note, toying with the messianic and the apocalyptic but refusing to call them by names not honored in the left-wing journals of the time. The final honesty of Roth's book lies in its refusal to call by any fashionable honorific name its child hero's bafflement as he learns the special beauty of a world which remains stubbornly unredeemed: "Not pain, not terror, but strangest triumph, strangest acquiescence. One might as well call it sleep."

The Dun Dakotas

HENRY ROTH

THERE was something ruinous about the time, or fatal to creative gusto, or so I feel. I have my inklings about its nature, my brief illumination, but just what it was I leave to others more competent at defining abstractions or rendering something definitive out of the multitude of eddies and appearances. The same sort of thing, we know, has happened before, also in a kind of revolutionary age, or one of rapid transition—the Romantics of the 19th century who either died physically, or figuratively, on the stump.

I have spent a great deal of time wondering about it; I don't spend so much now. By now, I console myself with the thought that my creative powers, such as they were, even though fully employed, would be on the decline anyway, and by now I would have met myself perhaps with certain volumes published, and conscious of a certain modicum of acclaim, and in possession of certain emoluments,

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to be sure. What difference does it make? The years would have been over in any event. Poor solace, I know. The mind shuttles and reminds. We go this way only once; and shuttles again and rejoins: once is enough.

I think it's been a tough time for writers, as it is. But on the other hand, when hasn't it been? And yet I know that there are periods of greater and lesser ferment, and inevitably those artists are luckier who have as a booster, so to speak, a dynamic time. We, at least those of my generation whom I knew, had it for a time, so I think, the fag end of it. But enough, you know, to get a sense of heady pioneering, stir, viable horizons. What's done's done, undone's undone; take it or leave it.

I'll tell you. In the whole range of my thoughts on the subject—and who hasn't his private continuum—right now it's morning. The sun is over the stable, and before me, between the house and stable lies the framed bit of snow-covered countryside in the state of Maine. You can see this could be the origin of a great many things that I could say about my life since *C.I.S.* was published. I can hear the geese bickering behind the stable, and anything I would mention would represent some phase of my present existence—and of course would have its trail all the way back to New York City, the slum childhood, the awareness of some talent, the creative period and the débâcle, and so forth. One has to put a term to things—fill it in as you like. I was a writer once, just as I was an eager East Side kid before that, and a mopey Harlem youth in the interim, who am now a waterfowl farmer. I don't know —now—how long I'll continue to be that. For one thing, one boy is already at college, and the other soon to go. Who will help around the place, lug in geese to be processed, help pluck, shovel the long driveway, chuck cord wood down the cellar bulkhead, and do the hundred chores of arms and legs. And at fifty-four, one's back begins to feel at times as if the plates had been welded.

I'd like to tell you a story, a yarn. It's sort of importunate at the back of my mind, though I'm not sure it's appropriate. And yet I find that these importunings are somehow more apt to be better guides of my destination than my reasoning.

It concerns an expedition into the Dakotas, and more particularly concerns a prologue that I was engaged in writing for the second novel—this, after I had already written a sizeable section. I haven't the prologue with me any more, and won't even attempt to reconstruct it as it was. The inevitable mule team, the soldiers trudging alongside, led by a Captain and a Scout, were crossing from the Bad Lands to the Black Hills. They had been commissioned to do a topographical study of their part of the country, and this was during the 70's of the last century. You can imagine the gnarled terrain, or consult an encyclopedia, or consult Mr. Eliot—the wrenched and contorted land, the lopped pillars and the grinning gulleys—the Scout reined in his horse: "Captain," he said, "did you ever see red cabbage a'growin'?"

The captain reflected: "I've seen red cabbage. I don't know as I ever saw it a'growin'."

"You'll see it now," said the Scout. "Look around you."

And the Captain looked. And on every ridge surrounding them, there were Redskins mounted on their ponies, their eagle feathers against the sky, a veritable paling of feather-crested men.

"Well," said the Captain, "what do we do now?"

"We gamble," said the Scout. "That's all we can do." He urged his horse ahead a few steps, and raised his arm in signal for parley. And down one of the nearby slopes clattered the bonneted Chief and some of his Braves. "How." No doubt, they said, "How." And perhaps, how kola.

"White man on my people hunting ground," said the Chief.

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"Chief," said the Scout, "we're just passin' through. White Father in Washington send us to make picture."

"Picture?"

"Picture of the land. So all white settler stay out. Keep peace."

"Ugh!" the Chief relaxed.

"Chief gamble?" said the Scout, producing a deck of cards. "Chief savvy cards?"

"Savvy poker," said the Chief.

"Good." They placed a blanket on the ground, and the two men gambled. They gambled for silver dollars, there between the Black Hills and the Bad Lands, among the stupendous shapes, under the stupendous sky. And the Chief's luck was extraordinary, and the Scout's bad luck equally so. He lost hand after hand, stake after stake, and his pile of silver dollars dwindled. "Never see such luck," said the Scout.

"Ugh," said the Chief. "Chief heap lucky. Heap strong."

And when his last silver dollar had changed hands, the Scout rose. "Chief," he said, "you won all our money. You let us pass now?"

The Chief folded his arms across his chest and dreamed a long dream or a long thought—whether of bison, or the bright tepees of childhood, or the game birds of youth I do not know.

But that was as far as I got for over twenty-five years, waiting for the decision of the Chief who had turned into stone or into legend, waiting for a man to decide what history was in the dun Dakotas, waiting for a sanction; and oddly enough it would have to be the victim who would provide it, though none could say who was the victim, who the victor. And only now can I tell you, and perhaps it's a good sign—at least for my generation, who waited with me—though perhaps it's too late.

"Will the Chief let us pass?" the Scout repeated. "Always remember Great Chief."

And the Chief unfolded his arms and motioned them the way of their journey. "Go now," he said.

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ASHER BRYNES

Economics of the Farm Problem

WHEN, last May, the omnibus Agriculture Appropriation Bill for 1961 was on the floor of the House for final consideration, a city Congressman rose to say: "There are literally no farmers in my district . . . [yet] our part of this $4,000,000,000 appropriation is about $100 per family. The question in my mind is, should I vote 'aye' when my name is called on this bill? The report would seem to indicate that we have been pouring money down a rathole here."

Throughout the session on the preceding day, when some two dozen members had joined in friendly debate, there was no comment of this kind. Congressman Jamie Whitten of Mississippi, floor manager of the bill, rose to answer: "Is the gentleman asking a question?" "Yes." Thereupon Mr. Whitten launched into the only general justification of the Agriculture Appropriation Bill that had seemed called for in two days of bickering over small points. "May I say," Mr. Whitten began, "that a big part of this bill is commitments where we have contracts, so we have to pay them. Our report [the report of Mr. Whitten's Subcommittee on Agricultural Appropriations] points up the feeling . . . which is very similar to that of the gentleman, that we need to do something . . . we are getting into more and more trouble, and in spite of the cost, the farmer's situation is getting worse. We point that out in an effort as best we can to push forward some improvement [*sic*]. But I do not think we would be doing the right thing not to pass this bill—we would be violating contracts, and we would be making bad matters worse."

The city Congressman persisted. "May I ask one more question? . . . I notice that the personnel in the Department of Agriculture has jumped from 67,000 in 1952 to 86,000 today. At the same time farm families have dropped around 700,000 and the farm population has dropped by three million. Would someone explain to me why we need more people in the Department when we have a smaller number of farmers to work with?"

To this Mr. Whitten replied: "The gentleman will remember that we wrote about this in the report and pointed these facts out because we have some question about it, too."

As this sitting of the House drew to a close after having produced that day more than thirty pages of small print, triple column, in the *Congressional Record* (in addition to forty-six pages the day before), a Delaware Congressman rose to deliver the one other substantial speech in opposition. "Mr. Chairman," he began apolo-

ASHER BRYNES collaborated with Ezra Taft Benson in the research and writing of *Freedom to Farm*, which has just been published by Doubleday. He has been Confidential Assistant (representing the non-farm point of view) to Secretary Benson and was also for a time chief of the Research and Development Staff of the Office of International Trade Fairs in the Department of Commerce. This article is a first statement of his own conclusions after two years of concern with agricultural politics.

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getically, "I presume that in some quarters a vote against this bill will be considered an act of legislative irresponsibility. Maybe so, but, for as long as the present politically inspired Congressional deadlock that prevents the passage of constructive legislation in the price-support field continues, I shall feel constrained to vote against any and all agricultural appropriation bills. . . .

"The farm program that Congress put together a generation ago in the dark days of the great depression, and that subsequent Congresses have been embroidering upon ever since . . . has produced for us virtual harvests of insanity that we can neither sell nor give away. . . . One can search in vain," he concluded, "without finding any specific suggestion for improving the situation worthy of grasping for as a drowning man might grasp for straws."

The bill was then passed without a record vote.

In the last seven years the support and subsidizing of agriculture has cost the people of the United States $26 billion. With the passage of the present bill the schedule has been set for a total farm expenditure by the administration of $32 billion.

The billion-dollar agricultural appropriation bills drift whole and untouched through months of subcommittee and committee hearings and successive debates in both houses of Congress year after year, and so great is their political momentum that they are rarely amended except to shift the billions around a bit inside each bill.

Nearly every cent of the billions appropriated for agriculture has been legislated as well as expended to the accompaniment of expressions of distaste by Ezra Taft Benson, the conservative Secretary of Agriculture who will probably be remembered as the man who spent the most money, most unwillingly, in all the long history of the United States.

What forced his hand? What made agriculture the third largest item in the national budget, outranked only by Defense and interest on the (Defense-generated) national debt—and followed by the (Defense-generated) Veterans Administration?

Partly, the answer lies in the place that farmers have traditionally occupied in the American scheme of things. In 1776 and 1787 nine-tenths of all United States citizens were farmers. Certain of the Founding Fathers—Jefferson most prominently—conceived of democracy as the way the people would forever govern themselves while toiling at agriculture to earn a living. "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds." On another occasion, Jefferson noted that the "Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age has furnished an example."

This idea that farmers are The People was written into our federal and state constitutions (and also into a great number of statutes) over the next century and a half. And to this very day, rural voters have maintained a disproportionate grip on the government in practically all jurisdictions but the municipal. (The citizens of Iowa, for instance, are now locked in struggle because farmers and rural people still control the state legislature although they compose less than a third of the state population.) Through the use of this power, farmers have been able to make the rest of the country pay for the fact that farm numbers are falling and the farm population shrinking.

In the decade before the First World War, one American in three was a farmer or a member of a farm family, and practically everybody had a relative who lived on the land. Agriculture was then at a peak of prosperity. The present price-support laws, in fact, stand substantially as written by political agrarians of twenty-five years ago, when the price of "basic"

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farm commodities was fixed at a guaranteed percentage of *parity*—a concept derived from the relation between farm and non-farm prices in the years 1910–1914 inclusive. This period had been American agriculture's most prosperous to date, and it provided a solid gold statistical yardstick with which to measure farm costs, prices, income, and other variables.

Nevertheless, during this very era, farm population kept declining and it declined even through the flash boom of the First World War. Continuing downward in the years that followed, it rose slightly in the depths of the great depression, then subsided again within the next two years. It has been slipping ever since. By 1954 farmers had dwindled to one eighth of the population, according to the special farm census of that year. It has been estimated that when the figures for this year's decennial census are tabulated, they will show that farm population has shrunk to about 17 million out of a total of 180 million people—or 9.5 per cent of the population.

The latest figures simply mark a continuation of a century-long trend whose causes are deeply imbedded in our social structure. As Colin Clark puts it, in *The Conditions of Economic Progress*: "Careful generalization of the available facts indicates that *the most important concomitant of economic progress is the movement of the working population from agriculture to manufacture, and then from manufacture to commerce and services.*" One of the products of economic advance is the expansion of opportunities for ill-paid, ill-housed, ill-fed country people to get better jobs in towns and cities. To country politicians this means lost votes, to country retailers and farm supply dealers lost trade, and to the farmers who have the skills and capital to stay put, an opportunity—given our political habits—to vote themselves considerable public support.

As farm numbers have fallen, agriculture has grown increasingly monetized: it takes more and more money to grow a crop. The farmer today has to spend seventy cents on supplies and labor before he can make a dollar. As a result, the economic ties between commercial farmers and local non-farm businesses and businessmen have become closer. At the same time, agriculture has also become increasingly consolidated. A family-type farm is now much larger than it used to be; the old 160-acre norm is obsolete—in the Corn Belt, for example, the general farm, if it is to yield optimum returns for the family labor invested in it, must approach 300 acres in size.

This process of consolidation—which has kept farm real estate values rising at an average rate of 6 per cent yearly in the past decade, and as much as 12 to 14 per cent in some areas—is still continuing (though it has slowed down in the past quarter). During and immediately after the Second World War, the consolidating process was facilitated by record profits; now it is fostered by technology and accelerated by competition. Improved models or new kinds of farm equipment and implements, fertilizers, and weed-killing, bug-killing, and growth-promoting chemicals; hybrid varieties or other improved strains of seed; scientifically compounded feeding supplements that contain antibiotics, minerals, and vitamins; portable irrigation systems—these and many other innovations, including such important factors as the new managerial technology of expanding output to lower unit costs on a given acreage and labor base—have enabled the more efficient *commercial* farmers and *full-time* farm workers to produce sufficient food and fiber for 100 and even more consumers per man.

As an industry, agriculture is now in a very strong position. Its total assets are up 300 per cent above 1940, the value of farm land has increased by 400 per cent; the average worth of a commercial farm is $135,000, and the average net income of commercial farm operators, from

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farming, is $7,200 per annum. As for that traditional indicator of trouble, the foreclosure rate, it was 16 per 10,000 farms last year; at the same time the comparable bankruptcy rate for all non-farm businesses was 52, or three and a half times higher.

The current Economic Report of the President sums it all up succinctly. Production per man-hour on farms in 1958 was more than three times the 1930–1939 average. In the last ten years this rise in efficiency was about 80 per cent, a growth rate of 6 per cent a year, or three times the increase in American industrial output per man-hour in the same period. With the increasing capitalization of farm operations, paid inputs expanded by two-thirds, and unpaid inputs (such as home-grown seed and fodder or feedstuffs for draft animals and livestock) declined by one-third of the average in 1930–1939.

One of the results of the rapid commercialization of agriculture has been to make farmers newly sensitive to the costs of goods and services they buy, in relation to the prices their own commodities sell for in the markets. Nothing more clearly illustrates the new condition than the fact that the risks of the market have become more serious to the commercial farmer than the risks of the weather; he watches price trends more anxiously than the barometer. The effect of this can be read between the lines of the current Agriculture Appropriations Bill. The amount directly budgeted by Congressman Whitten's Subcommittee on Agricultural Appropriations for price insurance ("stabilization") was $3,000,000,000 and the line budget item for federal crop insurance was $6,-300,000, that is, about one five-thousandth part of the former.

Yet federal money is still spent on agriculture as if the industry were seriously ailing. Last year the total net farm income of all farmers, from farm operations, was $11 billion. At the same time the federal expenditure on agriculture was about $6 billion. Which means that it cost the people of the United States more than 55 cents to enable our farmers to earn a dollar—more, since in this computation no allowance has been made for state expenditures in behalf of farming. The mayors of our big cities complain annually at their national conference (and did this year again) that farmer-dominated legislatures divert disproportionate shares of state tax funds.

Farm leaders concede that all this is true—the arithmetic is clear beyond any question. Their response generally is to point out that farm incomes per capita are somewhat less than half of the national income per capita—i.e., city folks earn twice as much, so they ought not to complain.

Among the statistics of agriculture, that particular one—the average farmer income—is beyond doubt the most misleading. Averages which lump all farmers together—the one-mule cotton and tobacco croppers of the Southeast, the 300-acre corn and hog farmers of the Midwest, the wheat men of the Great Plains holding upward of 2,500 acres, and the horn-of-plenty operators in the irrigated lands of Texas and California—are worse than useless—such figures are in fact fraudulent. About 85 per cent, by value, of all the marketed crops of food and fiber produced in the United States are grown on just about one third (about 1.3 million) of our farms.

The relatively small number of prosperous commercial farmers, not the more numerous needy, get the lion's share of public support. Nobody likes to talk about it outside the seminars on rural sociology, but we have a large farm population of older people, and of insufficiently endowed, under-educated, poorly capitalized, and generally unequipped and under-implemented farmers clinging to the scratch-lands of America. The Department of Agriculture has only just begun to tell them what else to do, where else to go. About a million dollars of federal money

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(a mere one six-thousandth of the total farm budget) was devoted to that purpose last year. This year the administration asked that the allocation for this purpose be tripled to one two-thousandth: Congressman Whitten saw fit to grant a sum of one four-thousandth of the total.

THE benefits of price stabilization, whether in the form of commodity loans or marketing orders, relate directly to the number of bushels, tons, bales, or pounds a farmer grows—and so are most helpful to the large commercial farmers. Federal Agricultural Conservation Program money, which runs to about a quarter of a billion dollars annually, is given to farmers for spending on lime and fertilizer chiefly, and benefits here are similarly related to the amount of acreage a farmer brings to the program and what he can do with the land after it has been needled with nutrients at the public cost. In the same way, it is the commercial farmer who stands to benefit most by agricultural research and education, market reporting and trend forecasting services, the grading and food inspection services.

The bias in favor of business farming is repeated in all fifty of the state departments of agriculture. These departments are run by professional agronomists for the benefit of commercial farmers. Farmers who grow less than commercial quantities of produce have, in the like proportion, less need for the services of these agencies; or to put it another way, it's an open secret in farm circles that the smaller the farm, generally speaking, the more poorly it is managed: the operator does not have the means to make use of good advice, even if offered. Economically, if not morally, this fact has appeared to justify a comparative neglect of the small farmer.

The only substantial USDA program with a built-in bias favoring the low-income or marginal farmer is the "soil bank," or Conservation Reserve. This device for taking surplus land out of production has been in operation since 1956, and at the present time about 5 per cent of U.S. cropland is under Conservation Reserve contracts which stipulate that it is to lie fallow—hence the word "conservation" in the title of the program. From ancient times until the development of soil science, fallowing was thought to be the only method, or more recently the essential method, for fertilizing land under cultivation. Now we know that the notion is utter hokum. Researchers have shown that the Chinese, for instance, cropped their lands continuously for thousands of years without ever giving their fertile soils any "rest," and one can travel through the length and breadth of rural America without ever finding—except in the Great Plains area, the semi-arid overworked Wheat Bowl of the continental United States—any farmers who practice biennial or triennial fallowing as once done.

Since Conservation Reserve contracts are long-term contracts, the "conservation" actually means the direct opposite of what it signifies in the ACP program described above; under such contracts, the farmer is paid to leave land uncultivated, but to plant grass or trees on it so that the rains won't wash the naked soil away. The average payment for planting such protective cover in the first year is about $12 per acre per year for three to ten years. Commercial farmers have been putting their poorer acres into this Reserve, while lavishing extra care on their better lands. The consequence has been little reduction, in many areas, in the amount of crops produced for the surplus stockpile.

The present administration, in a feeble opposition to this mad business, has offered special incentives for *whole-farm* placements in the Reserve. This creditable action does amount to concentrating the benefits of the program on the low-income farm population. Today about two-thirds of all the cropland in the Reserve consists of whole-farm units, whose owners have resigned from agriculture with a pension, so to speak, but can continue to live on the

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place, commute to a job in town, use the permanent pasture and orchard land, and maintain a home garden.

Recent plans to double the acreage impounded by this operation and to extend it through the next decade have withered because of the opposition of small-town feed, fertilizer, implement, and hardware dealers. The commercial farmer and small-town businessman often operate as a political team; they work hand in glove to uphold their mutual interests against the overwhelming majority of the people who live in the larger towns and cities. Under the sacred symbols of the family farm and the small enterprise, this team has developed and maintained, over the past twenty-five years, a system of subsidies, bounties, licensed monopolies, and other privileges without parallel, in proportion to their incomes, in the long history of economic intervention in the United States.

THE conviction of righteousness which pervades the Farm Belt when matters of current income and government assistance are discussed must be examined to be believed. Fortunately, a splendid example is at hand. Several months ago, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article entitled "The Farmer's Side of the Case." It was an impressively smooth job of writing, and it included a sufficient amount of data to derive, by cross-reference and a sparing use of standard statistics, the actual value of the farm enterprise offered as a test case.

The story begins, as so many farm narratives do, with a statement of faith. "My husband Carl and I firmly believe that our farm—a large beautiful, family-type farm —makes a substantial contribution to the economy and health of our country." It ends, as such narratives commonly do, with a statement of despair. "We hang on, knowing that for farmers everywhere there will be more debts, a gradual loss of their equity in their land and a widespread fear that some day, unless something is done, the scales will tip too far, and family farms such as ours will be a thing of the past."*

Then follow the facts. The Conger dairy farm in southeastern Kansas produces a thousand quarts of milk daily from a herd of 200 registered Holstein cows who graze on its 720 acres of land. For this average daily milk production the Congers receive, yearly, $29,000. They also grow 61 acres of wheat under a license (or "allotment") for full-price support, which boosts their gross income to at least $32,000.

The costing of their assets is a fairly simple matter. Holsteins of the quality described are worth $600 each, conservatively; thus the value of the herd is $120,000. Farmland averages, nationally, $111 per acre. Since this is an unusually well-run farm, the land is easily worth $125 an acre, or $90,000. Buildings—house, barns, silo, and milking parlor (a weird arrangement of machinery through which cows pass, supplying their own motive power, to be washed, tested, stripped of their milk, and ejected)—are estimated at $50,000. Finally, the implements and other equipment for a farm of this size (the vehicles, tractor, and so on) are valued at $20,000. The whole adds up to $280,000 before indebtedness.

Farm indebtedness is about 11 per cent of total farm assets today. Since Mrs. Conger supplies no data except to say that the farm was $7,000 in the red for operating expenses two years ago, we must impute the average ratio of debt, or about $30,000, to this particular farm. The Conger farm is probably worth a clear quarter of a million dollars.

* The claim that the family farm is dying out, and farm corporations are taking over, is a fraud. According to the most thorough study of this question, the USDA report on "Family Farms in a Changing Economy" (Agriculture Information Bulletin #171, 1957): "Since 1940, there is evidence that operators of family farms have made a slight gain over those of large-scale farms in controlling land resources and market sales." There are just as many family farms now, proportionately, as there were thirty years ago.

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When Mr. Conger bought the place in 1939, he made the down payment out of his savings as a county agent; and such agents used to be paid on the same scale as country school teachers. The remainder of the quarter million apparently came out of the earnings of the enterprise, plus inventory appreciation, over the twenty years from that time to the present, *after* deductions to cover all family expenses.

Most of this farm growth occurred in the war and postwar years. When the Korean war ended, a full decade of record-breaking profits for agriculture ended too, and an era of ordinary earnings began. "Since 1952 our farm has made little, if any, profit in good years—and in bad years such as 1955, we have lost as much as $4,058." Other commercial farms in the area averaged "only $4,834 in wages for their operators over the past six years." One of the clues to this odd situation is that Mrs. Conger and her friends do their bookkeeping thus, according to her own account: "Operating expenses are deducted from gross receipts . . . then a fair investment return of 6 per cent on net working capital and 4 per cent on net fixed capital is deducted . . . and the value of any unpaid labor—such as mine—is subtracted."

Commercial farmers who keep books in this way can live through years of adversity, claiming that they make no profits and little or no pay, while their families continue to live as usual. Nor must they necessarily go into debt. Returns on fixed and working capital may be quite substantial. Some commercial farmers can live fairly well on these deducts alone; and since they pay their dependents too, they may have a family income that is really handsome even while they themselves "work for nothing."

What, then, is the specific trouble with commercial farming? Does it really need 55 cents of federal expenditure for every dollar earned? As the Conger example shows, it all depends on how you define need.

That particular farm family has been in business only twenty years. The children have grown up and are earning cash wages, or salaries, in town. The Congers could sell out, if they chose, for a quarter of a million dollars. Conservatively invested, this would yield a depression-proof income of $14,000 yearly. Thus in two-thirds of the time it takes salaried persons employed by government or industry to accumulate a retirement fund, the Congers have arrived, and they can leave a substantial estate to each of their children besides.

In sum, we see here the agricultural problem: how such decent, average, hard-working, right-thinking country people, as farmers like the Congers present themselves, can claim they must be kept in business with public assistance when they could comfortably retire, or, if they must work, could turn to some other form of enterprise that normally and directly pays profits as well as wages to the proprietors.

But instead, they have chosen to farm —and complain. Some sections of the farm economy—especially wheat—have been so corrupted by subsidies that they would collapse if supports were withdrawn. Whole states in the Great Plains area, both the Dakotas, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, are kept afloat in the expectation of an uninterrupted flow of U.S. Treasury paper—CCC checks, conservation payments, soil bank remittances, and so on.

How much the U.S. Department of Agriculture will have to "lend" to farmers in any one year is unpredictable. The price-support laws specify that all basic crops grown on licensed or "allotted" acreage shall be acceptable as security or collateral for federal loans at fixed valuations per bushel or per pound. How much farmers may offer, and how much the Department must have on hand to pay out to them in loans, depends on unpredictable weather and market conditions. An un-

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usually good harvest (as in 1958) or large carry-over stocks from previous years could depress the market so seriously that unanticipated quantities of qualified crops are offered for federal loans—and abandoned in the government's possession. This has resulted, repeatedly, in the diminution of the Department's lending capacity. In such cases, the Department is authorized to borrow directly from the Treasury; and the "capital impairment" is made up in the next appropriation bill. This is a unique privilege possessed by no other department of the federal government nor, in all probability, by any of the state, municipal, or county governments or agencies throughout the United States. Agriculture and its clients enjoy the luxury of an open-ended budget.

At the present time the total of direct USDA loans to farmers or to agencies performing services for farmers, exclusive of loans guaranteed by the Department, is $17 billion. The Department's interest charges are invariably lower than those of any other lender, and the collateral it will accept is often of dubious value. To take one instance, the Commodity Credit Corporation, the price-support subsidiary of the Department, has a lending authority of $14.5 billion and an inventory of forfeited collateral for which $7.2 billion was paid. The carrying charges (interest, transportation, and storage costs only) on this and $2 billion of additional price-support loans not yet in default, are $1.25 billion annually, or $3.5 million every day. And in the last half of this year farmers will dump another billion dollars worth of surplus crops on the government.

Does all this make sense when the national welfare requires that we spend all we can spare on so many other important needs?

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MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Slums, Old and New

IT IS clear now that postwar America's greatest single social scandal has been its failure to provide adequate housing for its low-income groups. Less than half of the federal public housing units authorized by Congress in 1949 under Public Law 171 had been built by 1959—this was the estimate given by a spokesman for the AFL-CIO testifying last year before a Congressional Committee. Supporters of Public Law 171, before it was enacted, had prophetically argued that the 810,000 public housing units which the law envisioned would barely keep pace with the expected growth of slums in the next decade. Even this minimal program was cut in the 50's by the administration. The result—as expert witnesses have emphasized to Congress—is that no less than 13 million American families are now slum dwellers. That is to say, more Americans now live in slums than on farms—a fact pointed out by the president of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, Charles L. Farris.

The figures describe only the familiar traditional slums—the broken-down tenements without heat and often without running water. (The census in 1950 defined a dwelling unit as "dilapidated" when it "is run down or neglected, or is of inadequate original construction so that it does not provide adequate shelter or protection against the elements or it endangers the safety of the occupants.") Contrary to popular belief, the number of such slums has actually increased since 1949; the destruction of old slum neighborhoods for the various public housing programs, resulting in mass evictions, has intensified the pressure on existing slums and created many new ones.

The problem of slums in the postwar years, however, has become even more complicated with the development of the new public housing projects. For many of these have in their turn become what can only be described as "income ghettos"—centers for juvenile gangs, modern "poor farms" institutionalizing social disintegration. Physically sound, the buildings are, as the tenements they replaced often were, the setting for massive social problems and for a culture of poverty in which the opportunities for the young to escape have not appreciably improved.

By contrast both with the familiar dilapidated slums and the new concrete-and-steel, automatic-elevator slums, there still stand a few examples of a happier kind, whose residents do not at all exhibit the hopelessness we associate with the usual slum dweller. This is the traditional ethnic slum with a vital community life based on a national culture or religion. Such a community is to be found in New York City's Chinatown, within whose bounds delin-

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quency and crime are virtually nonexistent; it is one of the last remaining examples—the Kerry Patch and Little Italy, also in New York, are others—of the type of slum which was once a dynamic, creative part of American society.

The close of massive immigration after World War I brought with it the end, for the most part, of this first type of enclave, where a strong national culture managed to flourish amidst dilapidation in physical housing. (Puerto Ricans will probably be the last group to form such communities—at least until the present immigration laws are changed.) Today's changed slum, on the other hand, where the new poor of the affluent society live, resembles the old ethnic slum only in dilapidation and overcrowding; for the new slum is conspicuously lacking in any central culture, and most often is based solely upon the integration of poverty with poverty, failure with failure. The government's response to these problems of housing has been the public project; there, gross dilapidation no longer exists, but the slum psychology continues in an atmosphere of alienation by bureaucracy.

Consider, first, the character of the old ethnic slum, particularly in contrast to the newer tenement neighborhoods. The tenements of the first decades of the century had been built especially for the newcomers; they had not "trickled down" from the middle class. If the neighborhoods were dense and the housing utterly inadequate, there was nevertheless a community of language, religion, and the spirit of self-help. Above all, it was a time of expansion and hope—the great ideal of American opportunity that prevailed in the land informed the lives of these tenement dwellers, too.

Even now, there is a unique feeling to life in the the remnants of these old slums: one notices a concreteness, a kind of richness of existence, together with some of the old sense of identity and hope. In the best of these remaining neighborhoods, children swarm the streets throughout the day and early evening but rarely form themselves into violent gangs. If such neighborhoods are strident, they are also alive; if dotted with signs of the Old Country, they are at the same time way stations to the new.

When I moved into a Jewish slum on New York's Lower East Side several years ago, I was astonished that, the first day, a storekeeper nearby was quick to ask: "You live in 740, don't you?" The community was self-enclosed—it could figure out the street number of any stranger. On Saturday its streets were deserted for the Sabbath; on Sunday there was an air of parade and excitement.

The old slums, closed communities, were indeed centers of poverty, but out of them their inhabitants drew the strength to encounter the new society. George Orwell once said that a flourishing society would take care to preserve one of these neighborhoods, not so much to show how bad life had been in the past, but to let people know how good it had been—despite everything. Oscar Handlin, writing in the more formal language of sociology (in *The Newcomers*), noted that "the ethnic community supplied its members with norms and values and with the direction of an elite leadership."

But the great adventure of the ethnic slum is now drawing to an end. The residents in them who remain behind—in New York, the Irish and Germans of the South Bronx, the Jews of Williamsburg, the Italians of the South Village—are often old people who refuse to wrench themselves away from their past; others are among those who failed to make the climb over the economic and social walls of their group. To be sure, a social worker in a Brooklyn slum explains that some of those evicted from its tenements will move out to Long Island and buy a house; on the other hand, a priest in the Melrose section of the Bronx describes the Irish and German poor who must come to the parish house for help in dressing their

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children properly for their first communion.

The ones who stay behind face a far more difficult task than did the previous generations of slum dwellers. The children, separated from the aspirations of those now merging with the larger society, can inherit only the disadvantages of their "ghetto," surrounded as they are by elders who never made the transition to the new land.

THE new slum which has arisen houses the country's internal migrants—as opposed to the immigrants of the old slum. These internal migrants are largely Negroes from the South seeking jobs, whites from the farms also seeking work in the city, and Puerto Ricans. When they come into the areas of dilapidated housing to join those who have remained from the old ethnic cultures, an entirely different kind of neighborhood is formed. They arrive at a time of relative housing scarcity (when public housing was first proposed in the 30's about a quarter of the slum units were vacant)—which inhibits mobility even when income rises*—and, for many, the crucial problem is color, making the walls of their enclave almost impossible to surmount.

Leaving the subway at the Marcy Street stop in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, the first thing one notices is a Spanish record playing, Spanish titles on the movie marquee, Spanish shops along the street. Close by are shop windows displaying Hebrew lettering. Further down the street, Holy Trinity Church is the center for the remnants of an old German community. "Integration" here—some of the tenements house Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and whites together—is the integration of poverty, of rootless transients, of those forced to live together.

According to a young priest at Holy Trinity, his parish is made up of people on relief and workers with low-paying jobs —many of the latter are in the garment trades; and each family has three or four children. Except for a few clubs, the church is the center of whatever community life there is. The parishioners are "worried silly," to use the young priest's phrase, because a Title I Project is moving into the area and will uproot them. At another community center, a social worker reported that while 6,000 people over the last few years have moved out of the neighborhood—the poor to other slums, the better-off to the suburbs—since 1955 Negroes and Puerto Ricans have been moving in steadily.

Poverty is the basis of the country's new slums. In New York City, for instance, there are some 300,000 "hard core" Public Assistance cases—the mentally ill, the aged, the chronically sick. In a recession (such as that of 1957–58), their number is immediately swelled by another hundred thousand or so and according to the New York State Interdepartmental Committee on Low Incomes, these "hard core" cases actually represent less than a fourth of those qualified for Public Assistance. In effect, over one million New Yorkers lack enough of the "basic necessities"—food, shelter, minimal medical care—to qualify for Public Assistance.

In New York City, minorities form a large part of this slum population. Public Assistance recipients in the 50's included 31.3 per cent whites, 40 per cent Negroes, and 28.7 per cent Puerto Ricans. (The federal census classes most Puerto Ricans as white. On a national scale, these statistics would probably appear as 43 per cent Negro and 57 per cent white.) Thus, the decline of aspiration among slum dwellers partly reflects a sophisticated analysis of society: for the colored minori-

* New York, from which most of these examples that follow will come, is hardly a typical American city. Yet the New York experience is being repeated in various ways throughout the nation. In Chicago, an important element is the white sharecropper, in St. Louis the Southern Negro on his way North, in Los Angeles the Mexican-American. In each case, the internal migrant joins with those who have stayed behind in the older slums.

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ties there *is* less opportunity today than there existed for the white population of the older ethnic slums, and the new slum people know this. The poverty of their myths reflects the poverty of their reality.

THE quality of the new slum life is suggested by the kind of family it houses. Where the ethnic slum was usually centered around a stable family life, the pattern of the new slum is that of "serial monogamy"; a woman will live with one man for a considerable period of time, bear his children, and then move on to another man. In a National Education Association study, Walter B. Miller estimated that between a quarter and a half of the urban families in the United States are "female based"—a finding that applies most clearly to slum dwellers.

The inhabitants of the new slums are also regular victims of a bureaucratically produced rootlessness. Government housing programs, and particularly the urban renewal activities of the middle and late 50's, generally initiated a migration within the cities involved. In 1959, for instance, the Mill Creek area of St. Louis was cleared—a middle-class housing development is to replace what had been a Negro slum—as part of an urban renewal effort. The great problem created by this particular clearance was that the majority of those evicted were forced to find housing within the existing Negro slums. Only 14 per cent found their way into low-cost projects; the majority disappeared altogether from the public records. The constant shifting caused by the renewal projects makes the development of community life impossible in many of the new slums. In 1958, a study in New York quoted the poignant cry of an old resident in one of these transitional areas: "Nobody, not even an angel, can avoid trouble here. Too many people with no investment and no pride in the neighborhood. Too many just passing through. I feel sorriest for the kids —they've never known what a decent neighborhood is like."

When the home itself is rootless and transient, the problem of the slum child can easily be imagined.* Juvenile delinquency is non-conformist and clearly anti-social from the middle-class point of view; as seen from within the slum, however, it is often a process of carrying everyday home values to their logical extremes. The older ethnic slums, too, produced their share of violence and gangsterism, but their family patterns, their value systems, and their very access to the outside world, provided strong counter forces. In the new slum, these checks are not nearly so strong.

The phrase that most aptly summarizes the major difference between the new slums and the older ones of the great immigration is: the absence of aspiration. At the end of 1959, the Gallup Poll surveyed the attitudes of Americans on the eve of the new decade. Its findings were broken down according to income—it divided the United States into five classes—and the consistency of response on the part of the lowest group (under $3,000 a year) is startling. In answer to both general and specific questions, the individuals in this group were the least optimistic. More of them expected World War III and a new depression than did those of any other group. In instance after instance, these respondents voiced less hope of any kind of deliverance than did any other income group. These pessimistic respondents are the inhabitants of the slums.

Further undermining any possible sense of aspiration is the vicious circle set up by the slum dweller's view of society. Seeing his chances for improvement as slim produces in him a psychology of listlessness, of passivity, and of acceptance, which, in turn, reduces his chances still further. So it is that the Negro child in a St. Louis school could hardly grasp the idea of a re-

* In his study of the New York gangs, *The Shook-Up Generation,* Harrison E. Salisbury quoted a police estimate that there were 8,000 young people in the city actively engaged in violent, anti-social conduct and perhaps another 100,000 who lived on the edge of this underworld.

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prieve for Caryl Chessman: "You mean I can shoot people and no one would shoot me?" Ideals and aspiration arise with the greatest difficulty from an environment of violence and ugliness; but the lack of aspiration and ideals only perpetuates the violence and ugliness.

THE current answer to the slum is the low-cost housing project. But the number of dwelling units which have thus far been built do not even equal the number that have been destroyed in the clearing of the project sites. In New York in 1954, one public housing unit existed for every 7.1 newly eligible families; in 1956, one for every 10.4 newly eligible families. (These figures are roughly typical of the nation as a whole.) More importantly, the experience of the hundreds of thousands of people who have entered the projects signify that these projects have become a source of new housing problems, or are inadequate solutions of the old ones.

Probably the best publicized of the new problems is the project's continuing tendency to produce violence, in particular juvenile crime. Harrison Salisbury's *Shook-Up Generation* centered on gangs in New York's housing projects. "Theirs," he wrote, "is a world of young people harshly buffeted by grim realities—poverty, hunger, physical hardship, danger, displacement, disease, and deprivation. Beset by force and violence they escape into paranoid visions of grandeur, daydreams of demonic power, ecstacies of sadism, endless fantasies with a gun."

In December 1959, a grand jury investigation in St. Louis found a similar pattern in that city's projects. "Generally speaking," the jury wrote, "the rate of crimes against the person—murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—is approximately two and a half times higher than the city-wide average." It continues: "Based on testimony we have received, outside teen-age hoodlums have used the project buildings for gambling, drinking and all kinds of minor crimes. . . ."

There are, of course, projects free of violent juvenile gangs, but in them, social disintegration continues in less obvious forms. For one thing, the projects tend to be huge and impersonal, a bureaucratic environment often disorienting to the old slum dwellers. Writing of a Lower East Side development in New York City, a young sociologist, Michael Miller, described the ways in which the tenants respond to their new experience with administrative routine. To them management was distant; it represented a powerful disciplinary authority involving rules, constant checks on violations, and all the other formalities of the bureaucratic world. For a Puerto Rican family, Miller points out, the first encounter with the eviction notice (which is delivered for failure to pay the rent on time) is a perplexing, even a frightening matter. (Salisbury has noted that the "rent girl," a sort of combination social worker and bill collector, once a major positive link between the people and the project management, is no longer used.) In St. Louis, a social worker tells of families who become constipated because of their perplexity in the presence of modern plumbing.

How does the project dweller attempt to cope with this distant, powerful authority? Describing three "styles of life" among the people in the project he studied, Miller found one group adopting a strategy of complete withdrawal from whatever sense of community the project offered. These residents isolated themselves in their own apartment, or else maintained ties with some ethnic group or old neighborhood on the outside. As a result, they were most alienated precisely when at home.

Another group sought some identification by developing an ethnic grouping within the project. Miller describes the "bench culture" in front of the houses: on the south side, the Jewish benches; across from them, the Puerto Ricans; and across the play area, the Negroes. The hostilities produced by this situation obviously

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made the development of any kind of community life extremely difficult.

A third group, a rather small one, worked with the Tenant Council. But, by a predictable irony, they were regularly targets for eviction, for their incomes tended to rise, and they were in constant danger of exceeding the maximum established by law. These activists often ended up talking only to one another, forming a sort of elite community within the otherwise indifferent project.

The Fuller Houses in the Chelsea section of New York have often been cited as the model of a "good project." Perhaps this project's most obvious advantage is the presence of the Hudson Guild, an old, established community center which has had some success in bridging the gap between the newcomers and the older neighborhood. The Guild is opposed to the concept of a "project community," and conceives of its work as covering the entire neighborhood.

The neighborhood of the Fuller Houses is more mixed than most slum areas which ring housing projects. A few blocks away is a large middle-class apartment house. A considerable number of Irish and Italian workers have remained in the "old-law" tenements which, under rent control, cost no more than $45 or $50 a month. In some cases, old property has been rehabilitated, thus bringing a new stratum of middle-class people into the neighborhood. In the near future, there will be an International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union cooperative development, which will broaden the community base even more.

The Fuller Houses themselves are radically integrated—45 per cent of the residents are Puerto Rican, 25 per cent Negro, and 30 per cent white. Tenants with whom I talked could not recall seeing anything like the ethnic "bench culture" which Miller found on the Lower East Side, nor are there any violent gangs in the project or in the surrounding neighborhood. The Hudson Guild has even employed closed-circuit television in an attempt to provide the project with an exciting means of communication. (The experiment was not successful: according to the Guild, because of inadequate programming; according to some of the project residents, because the system interfered with the reception of the regular, commercial channels.)

All the virtues of the Fuller Houses, however, have not been sufficient to destroy the crushing inheritance of the slum past of their residents. A nursery in the Guild has difficulty in attracting children from the project, although middle-class parents from blocks away send their children to take advantage of the Guild facilities. It would seem that a certain level of aspiration and culture is necessary before one can take advantage of modern opportunities.

When one project family took its children and some of their playmates to the beach (hardly a difficult, or expensive, outing for a New Yorker), other residents of the project were excited and surprised at their adventure. People who had lived within an hour's subway ride of the ocean for most of their lives had never seen it; neither had their children. The trip to the beach required a transition in values which they had simply never made. In short, public housing by itself fails to solve the problem of slum psychology.

IT IS simple enough—only a matter of money—to destroy tenements and dilapidated buildings. In 1955, Joseph P. McMurray, then State Housing Commissioner of New York, estimated that abolishing slums within twenty-five years would require a public and private investment of $125 billion, a sum five times larger than the current government commitment. But while new buildings can be put up for the old, that hardly solves the real problem. The basic issue is not new buildings, but the eradication of the whole cultural and spiritual inheritance of the slum past. Public housing must be seen as one element in a comprehensive and in-

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tegrated program, or else it will fail. Simultaneous with the attack upon dilapidation, there must be an attempt to create communities which will transform the slum psychology. And this cannot be done by segregating the poor on the basis of class or caste. What is required is a basic change in the way we have been thinking about public housing.

The original federal housing program in 1935 was part of a depression attempt to "prime" the economy; it placed a heavy emphasis on inducing private investment and stimulating employment. The conditions which gave rise to this approach no longer existed after the war, but the approach remained the same. In June 1960, FHA and VA guarantees exceeded $76 billion—half the funds needed for a serious drive to eliminate slums from American life. Yet this money did not go to the aid of the slum dweller, but to provide housing for the middle class, and so often increased the number of slums.

In 1959, Charles Abrams, testifying before a Senate committee, said that the public housing program had become "little more than an adjunct of the publicly subsidized private urban renewal program. This urban renewal program too, while it does help cities to get rid of slums, has developed into a device for displacing the poor from their footholds to make way for higher rental dwelling which those displaced cannot afford. Thus, the lowest-income family remains the forgotten family, though it is still the most home-needy in the American family circle." Abrams also estimated that it took an annual income of over $6,000 before an American family could seriously think of buying its own home.

TO DEAL with the problem of slum psychology, as administrators like Charles L. Ferris of St. Louis have proposed, low-cost and middle-income units should be interspersed, and there should be far more serious attempts than have as yet been made to integrate public housing with existing, and vital, neighborhoods. There must also be a limit on building size (Ferris suggests eight families) to avoid the creation of an impersonal, bureaucratic environment. Existing private, individual housing should become, whenever possible, the focus of a campaign for rehabilitation, and where there are projects, there should be an adequate budget for social work and the maintenance of community centers.

There must, in short, be new neighborhoods composed of a variety of housing; individual homes, some of them new, some of them refurbished; low-rise housing built in relatively small units, and so forth. The residents should be of every income level, race, and national group. Community institutions—schools, social centers, parks, and so on—should be planned beforehand as part of the program for helping to create a neighborhood. Finally, the administration and decision-making apparatus for the neighborhood should be instituted along the most personal possible lines.

This may all seem utopian. It certainly is, if measured against the standard of present policy which is inadequate even for the problem of dilapidation. And yet, unless an image of this type defines our housing programs, we will continue to perpetuate that costly social phenomenon, poverty, and to institutionalize, moreover, the psychology of hopelessness. Present life conditions of the poor breed a situation which *already* requires a good portion of every city budget in the United States. If slums could be eliminated, there would be, as has often been pointed out, a substantial saving in terms of welfare, police, and fire appropriations. Then, too, perhaps our urban life as a whole could be substantially enriched.

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LEWIS YABLONSKY

The Violent Gang

IT IS a truism that criminal organizations and criminal activities tend to reflect social conditions. Just as surely as the Bowery gang mirrored aspects of the 1900's, the Capone mob aspects of the 20's, and the youth gangs of the depression elements of the 30's, so do the delinquent gangs that have developed since the 1940's in the United States reflect certain patterns of our own society.

The following quotations indicate the tone and ethos of a representative gang of today, the so-called Egyptian Kings, whose members beat and stabbed to death a fifteen-year-old boy named Michael Farmer in a New York City park not long ago. Michael Farmer, who had been crippled by polio, was not known to the Kings before the killing, nor had he been acquainted with any members of the gang.

"He couldn't run any way, 'cause we were all around him. So then I said, 'You're a Jester,' and he said 'Yeah,' and I punched him in the face. And then somebody hit him with a bat over the head. And then I kept punchin' him. Some of them were too scared to do anything. They were just standin' there, lookin'."

* * *

"I was watchin' him. I didn't wanna hit him, at first. Then I kicked him twice. He was layin' on the ground, lookin' up at us. I kicked him on the jaw, or some place; then I kicked him in the stomach. That was the least I could do, was kick 'im."

* * *

"I was aimin' to hit him, but I didn't get a chance to hit him. There was so many guys on him—I got scared when I saw the knife go into the guy, and I ran right there. After everybody ran, this guy stayed, and started hittin' him with a machete."

* * *

"Somebody yelled out, 'Grab him. He's a Jester.' So then they grabbed him. Magician grabbed him, he turned around and stabbed him in the back. I was . . . I was stunned. I couldn't do nuthin'. And then Magician—he went like that and he pulled . . . he had a switch blade and he said, 'You're gonna hit him with the bat or I'll stab you.' So I just hit him lightly with the bat."

* * *

Magician stabbed him and the guy he . . . like hunched over. He's standin' up and I knock him down. Then he was down on the ground, everybody was kickin' him, stompin' him, punchin' him, stabbin' him so he tried to get back up and I knock him down again. Then the guy stabbed him in the back with a bread knife."

The attitudes toward homicide and violence that emerge from these statements led to eleven gang killings last summer

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and can be expected to produce an even greater number from now on.

One important difference between the gangs of the past and those that now operate on our city streets is the prevalence of the psychopathic element in the latter. The violent gangs of the 20's contained psychopaths, but they were used to further the profit-making goal of the gang, and were themselves paid for their violence. Here, for example, is how Abe "Kid Twist" Reles—who informed on Murder, Inc., and confessed to having committed over eighteen murders himself—described the activities of the Crime Trust to a writer in *The Nation*:

> The Crime Trust, Reles insists, never commits murders out of passion, excitement, jealousy, personal revenge, or any of the usual motives which prompt private unorganized murders. It kills impersonally and solely for business considerations. No gangster may kill on his own initiative; every murder must be ordered by the leaders at the top, and it must serve the welfare of the organization. . . . Any member of the mob who would dare kill on his own initiative or for his own profit would be executed. . . . The Crime Trust insists that murder must be a business matter organized by the chiefs in conference and carried out in a disciplined way.

Frederic Thrasher's famous analysis of Chicago gangs in the mid-20's describes another group that bears only a limited resemblance to the violent gangs of today. Thrasher's gangs

> . . . broke into box cars and "robbed" bacon and other merchandise. They cut out wire cables to sell as junk. They broke open telephone boxes. They took autos for joy-riding. They purloined several quarts of whiskey from a brewery to drink in their shack. . . .

Nor do the gangs of the 30's and early 40's described by W. F. Whyte in *Street Corner Society* bear much resemblance to the violent gang of today. The difference becomes strikingly evident when we compare the following comments by two Egyptian Kings with those of Doc, the leader of Whyte's Norton Street gang.

> "I just went like that, and I stabbed him with the bread knife. You know I was drunk so I stabbed him. [*Laughs*] He was screamin' like a dog. He was screamin' there. And then I took the knife out and told the other guys to run. . . ."
>
> * * *
>
> "The guy that stabbed him in the back with the bread knife, he told me that when he took the knife out o' his back, he said, 'Thank you.' "

Now Doc, leader of the Norton Street gang:

> "Nutsy was a cocky kid before I beat him up. . . . After that, he seemed to lose his pride. I would talk to him and try to get him to buck up. . . . I walloped every kid in my gang at some time. We had one Sicilian kid on my street. When I walloped him, he told his father and the father came out looking for me. I hid up on a roof, and Nutsy told me when the father had gone. When I saw the kid next, I walloped him again—for telling his father on me. . . . But I wasn't such a tough kid, Bill. I was always sorry after I walloped him."

Doc's comments about beating up Nutsy—"I would talk to him and try to buck him up"—or about fighting the other kids—"I was always sorry after I walloped them"—are in sharp contrast to the post-assault comments of the Egyptian Kings. Here is how one of the Kings who stabbed Farmer replied to my questions about his part in the homicide. The interview took place in a reformatory.

> KING: "I stab him with the butcher—I mean the bread-knife and then I took it out."
> QUESTION: "What were you thinking about at the time, right then?"
> KING: "What was I thinking? [*Laughs*] I was thinking whether to do it again."
> QUESTION: "Are you sorry about what happened?"
> KING: "Am I sorry? Are you nuts; of

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course, I'm sorry. You think I like being locked up?"

The element of friendship and camaraderie—one might almost call it cooperativeness—that was central to the Norton Street gang and others like it during the depression is entirely absent from the violent gang of today. To be sure, "candy store" or corner hang-out groups similar to those described by Whyte still exist, but it is not such groups who are responsible for the killings and assaults that have caused so much concern in our major cities in recent years.

Today's violent gang is, above all, characterized by flux. It lacks all the features of an organized group, having neither a definite number of members, nor specific membership roles, nor a consensus of expected norms, nor a leader who supplies directive for action. It is a mob-like collectivity which forms around violence in a spontaneous fashion, moving into action—often on the spur of an evening's boredom—in search of "kicks." Violence ranks extremely high in the loose scheme of values on which such gangs are based. To some boys it acts as a kind of existential validation, proving (since they are not sure) that they are alive. Others, clinging to membership in this marginal and amorphous organization, employ violence to demonstrate they are "somebody." But most members of the gang use violence to acquire prestige or to raise their "rep."

"I didn't want to be like . . . you know, different from the other guys. Like they hit him, I hit him. In other words, I didn't want to show myself as a punk. You know, ya always talkin', 'Oh, man, when I catch a guy, I'll beat him up,' and all of that, you know. And after you go out and you catch a guy, and you don't do nothin' they say, 'Oh man, he can't belong to no gang, because he ain't gonna do nothin'.' "

* * *

"Momentarily I started to thinking about it inside: I have my mind made up I'm not going to be in no gang. Then I go on inside. Something comes up, den here come all my friends coming to me. Like I said before, I'm intelligent and so forth. They be coming to me—then they talk to me about what they gonna do. Like, 'Man, we'll go out here and kill this cat.' I say, 'Yeah.' They kept on talkin'. I said, 'Man, I just gotta go with you.' Myself, I don't want to go, but when they start talkin' about what they gonna do, I say, 'So, he isn't gonna take over my rep. I ain't gonna let him be known more than me.' And I go ahead just for selfishness."

* * *

"If I would of got the knife, I would have stabbed him. That would have gave me more of a build-up. People would have respected me for what I've done and things like that. They would say, 'There goes a cold killer.' "

* * *

"It makes you feel like a big shot. You know some guys think they're big shots and all that. They think, like you know, they got the power to do everything they feel like doing. They say, like, 'I wanna stab a guy,' and then the other guy says, 'Oh, I wouldn't dare to do that.' You know, he thinks I'm acting like a big shot. That's the way he feels. He probably thinks in his mind, 'Oh, he probably won't do that.' Then, when we go to fight, you know, he finds out what I do."

The structure of the violent gang can be analyzed into three different levels. At the center, on the first level, are the leaders, who—contrary to the popular idea that they could become "captains of industry if only their energies were redirected"—are the most psychologically disturbed of all the members. These youths (who are usually between eighteen and twenty-five years old) need the gang more than anyone else, and it is they who provide it with whatever cohesive force it has. In a gang of some thirty boys there may be five or six such leaders who desperately rely on the gang to build and maintain a "rep," and they are always working to keep the gang together and in action. They enlist new members (by force), plot,

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and talk gang warfare most of their waking hours.

At the second level, there are youths who claim affiliation to the gang but only participate in it sporadically. For example, one of the Egyptian Kings told me that if his father had not given him a "bad time" and kicked him out of the house the night of the homicide, he would not have gone to the corner and become involved in the Michael Farmer killing. The gang was for this boy, on that night, a vehicle for acting out aggressions related to another area of his life. Such a "temporal" gang need, however, is a common phenomenon.

At the third level are boys who occasionally join in with gang activity but seldom identify themselves as members of the gang at any other time. One boy, for instance, went along with the Egyptian Kings and participated in the Farmer killing, as he put it, "for old time's sake." He never really "belonged" to the gang: he just happened to be around that night and had nothing else to do.

The "size" of violent gangs is often impossible to determine. If a leader feels particularly hemmed in at a given moment, he will say—and believe—that his gang is very large. But when he is feeling more secure, he will include in his account of the gang's size only those members he actually knows personally. In the course of a one-hour interview, for example, a gang leader variously estimated the size, affiliations, and territory of his gang as follows: membership jumped from 100 to 4,000, affiliation from five brother gangs or alliances to sixty, and territorial control from about ten square blocks to jurisdiction over the boroughs of New York City, New Jersey, and part of Philadelphia. To be sure, gangs will often contact one another to discuss alliances, and during the street-corner "negotiations," the leaders will brag of their ability to mobilize vast forces in case of a fight. On a rare occasion, these forces will actually be produced, but they generally appear quite spontaneously—the youths who participate in such alliances have very little understanding of what they are doing.

The meaning of gang membership also changes according to a boy's needs of the moment. A youth will belong one day and quit the next without necessarily telling any other member. To ask certain gang boys from day to day whether they are Dragons or Kings is comparable to asking them, "How do you feel today?" So, too, with the question of role. Some boys say that the gang is organized for protection and that one role of a gang member is to fight—how, when, whom, and for what reason he is to fight are seldom clear, and answers vary from member to member. One gang boy may define himself more specifically as a protector of the younger boys in the neighborhood. Another will define his role in the gang by the statement, "We are going to get all those guys who call us Spics." Still others say their participation in the gang was forced upon them against their will.

Despite these differences, however, all gang members believe that through their participation they will acquire prestige and status; and it is quite clear, furthermore, that the vagueness which surrounds various aspects of gang life and organization only enables the gang to stimulate such expectations and, in some respects, actually helps it to fulfill them. Similarly, if qualifications for membership were more exact, then most gang members would not be able to participate, for they lack the ability to assume the responsibilities of more structured organizations.

The background out of which the violent gang has emerged is fairly easy to sketch. In contemporary American society, youth is constantly bombarded by images —from the media, schools, and parents— of a life of ownership and consumption, but for the great majority of young people in this country, and especially for those from depressed social and economic backgrounds, the means of acquiring such objectives are slim. Yet something more defi-

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nite than class position or the inadequate relation between means and ends disturbs young people. It is the very fact of their youth which places them at an immediate disadvantage; objects and goals that adults take for granted are, for them, clearly unattainable. As a consequence, many young people step beyond the accepted social boundaries in an attempt to find through deviant means a dramatic short-cut to an immediate feeling of success.*

Drugs and alcohol are two possible short cuts; another characteristic deviant path is the search for thrills or "kicks." The violent gang, especially because it is both flexibly organized and amenable to the distortions of fantasy, is an obvious vehicle for acting out the desire for ownership and status. In the gang, a youth can be "president" and control vast domains, while the members can reinforce one another's fantasies of power—"Don't call my bluff and I won't call yours." In the gang, it is only necessary to talk big and support the talk with some violent action in order to become a "success," the possessor of power and status: "We would talk a lot and like that, but I never thought it would be like this. Me here in jail. It was just like fun and kidding around and acting big."

THE choice of violence as a means toward achieving "social" success seems to be the result in part of the past two decades of war as well as the international unrest that filters down to the gang boy and gives him the same feelings of uneasiness that the average citizen experiences. At this level of analysis, direct causal relations are by *no means* precise; yet a number of connections do seem apparent.

A considerable amount of explicit data indicates that recent wars and current international machinations serve as models for gang warfare. For example, one form of gang battle is called a "Jap": "a quick stomp where a group of guys go into an enemy's territory, beat up some of their guys and get out fast. The thing is not to get caught." "Drafting" members is another common gang practice. The boys themselves freely use such terms as "drafting," "allies" (brother gangs), "war counselor," "peace treaty," etc., and they often refer, both directly and indirectly, to more complex patterns of conflict and structure. Here is one Egyptian King talking about a territorial dispute:

> "You have a certain piece of land, so another club wants to take over your land, in order to have more space, and so forth. They'll fight you for it. If you win, you got your land; if you don't win, then they get your land. The person that loses is gonna get up another group, to help out, and then it starts all over again. Fight for the land again."

Here is another discussing gang organization:

> "First, there's the president. He got the whole gang; then there comes the vice president, he's second in command; then there's the war counselor, war lord, whatever you're gonna call it—that's the one that starts the fights; then there's the prime minister—you know, he goes along with the war counselor to see when they're gonna fight, where they're gonna fight. And after that, just club members."

Murder, Inc., Thrasher's gangs, and Whyte's Norton Street gang did not have the "divisions," "war lords," and "allies" typical of the contemporary violent gang.

In addition to this international model, it is important to note that many weapons now used by gangs were brought to this country by veterans of recent wars. Where in former years, gang wars were more likely to be fought with sticks, stones, and fists, today abandoned World War II weapons such as machetes (one was used in the Michael Farmer killing) and lugers consistently turn up. The returning soldiers also brought back stories of violence

* This statement is a gross oversimplification of conceptual developments of Emile Durkheim, Robert Merton, and others, who have examined the means-goal dislocation.

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to accompany the weapons. War and violence dominated not only the front pages of the press, but everyday family discussion, and often it was a father, an uncle, or an older brother whose violent exploits were extolled.

Another aspect of international events which gang youths may have absorbed, and which they certainly now emulate, is the authoritarian-dictatorial concept of leadership. Earlier gangs sometimes utilized democratic processes in appointing leaders. But, today, in the violent gang, the leader is usually supreme and gang members tend to follow him slavishly. In recent years, in fact, there have been many abortive attempts—several on the Upper West Side of New York City—to pattern gangs specifically upon the model of Hitler and the Nazi party.

What finally confronts the youth of today is the possibility of total destruction by atomic power—everyone is aware of this on some level of consciousness—and the possibility of induction into the army at a point when he might be establishing himself in the labor force. In short, the recent history of international violence, the consequences of the past war, and the chance of total annihilation, establish a framework which may not only stimulate the formation of gangs but in some respects may determine its mode of behavior —in other words, its violence.

But such background factors, however much they create an atmosphere that gives implicit social approval to the use of violence, cannot actually explain how violence functions for the gang boy. As I have already indicated, gang youths feel extremely helpless in their relations to the "outside" world. The gang boy considers himself incapable of functioning in any group other than the gang, and is afraid to attempt anything beyond the minimal demands of gang life. One interesting indication of this is the way gang boys respond to flattery. They invariably become flustered and confused if they are complimented, for the suggestion that they are capable of more constructive activity upsets their conviction of being unfit for the hazards of a life outside the protective circle of the gang.

Given this low self-estimate, the gang boy has carved out a world and a system of values which entail only the kind of demands he can easily meet. Inverting society's norms to suit himself and the limits of his partly imagined and partly real potential, he has made lying, assault, theft, and unprovoked violence—and especially violence—the major activities of his life.

The very fact that it is *senseless* rather than premeditated violence which is most highly prized by the gang, tells us a great deal about the role violence plays for the gang boy. He is looking for a quick, almost magical way of achieving power and prestige, and in a single act of unpremeditated intensity he at once establishes a sense of his own existence and impresses this existence on others. No special ability is required—not even a plan—and the anxiety attendant upon executing a premeditated (or "rational") act of violence is minimized in the ideal of a swift, sudden, and "meaningless" outbreak. (To some extent, the public's reaction to this violence, a reaction, most obviously, of horror, also expresses a sort of covert aggrandizement—and this the gang boy instinctively understands.)

Thus the violent gang provides an alternative world for the disturbed young who are ill-equipped for success in a society which in any case blocks their upward mobility. The irony is that this world with its nightmare inversion of the official values of our society is nevertheless constructed out of elements that are implicitly (or unconsciously) approved—especially in the mass media—and that its purpose is to help the gang boy achieve the major value of respectable society: success. "I'm not going to let anybody be better than me and steal my 'rep' . . . when I go to a gang fight, I punch, stomp, and stab harder than anyone."

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ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Boris and the 2nd Avenue Muse

A Memoir

WHEN Boris called me in the summer of 1952, it had been a full three years since I had last heard from him; yet he launched into his proposition with only the most peremptory greeting.

"How would you like to play General MacArthur?"

"Play who?"

"General *MacArthur!* It's a fat role, I promise you, and you're perfect for it."

"What have you got going now," I asked, "a war play?"

"A Jolson play," he answered. "But the general is a very important character."

"I think you should know that MacArthur is not one of my favorite people," I replied.

"Who wants you to *love* him?" asked Boris with exasperation. "I only want you to *play* him."

"Is this for money?"

"Certainly. You get paid by the performance plus four days rehearsal pay. We rehearse beginning of the week and do the show on the weekend: once Friday, and three a day Saturday and Sunday—seven times in all."

"I see, I see," I said, trying to combat my temptation to accept, "so you're working off Broadway now."

"Hell, no. Second Avenue," replied Boris, triumphantly. "You're talking to the new sweetheart of the Yiddish theater."

"Yiddish theater," I repeated, in a panic, "since when am I supposed to speak Yiddish?"

"You're going to speak *English,*" said Boris impatiently. "Whoever heard of a Yiddish General MacArthur? Don't worry, you'll be a sensation. On Second Avenue they love well-bred Jewish boys who speak good English. Anyway," he added, "I'm the only one has to be bilingual. We got pros for the Yiddish parts and for the English roles I'm lining up all my *goyishe* friends—like you."

This was altogether typical of the shafts Boris used to aim in my direction when we were students together at the Yale Drama School. What Boris was doing at Yale I have never been able to determine, but it was clear that the place baffled him and that third-generation Jews like myself baffled him even more. To me, on the other hand, it was he that always seemed the outlander. A thickly set tatterdemalion with Slavic features, drowsy lids, corpulent lips, and an enormous number of teeth, he had been born in Russia and emigrated to Detroit as a child. He was a bit older than the rest of us, having matured in depression America, and the depression still clung to him even when we first met in 1948. Boris was devoted to talk, speaking English, Yiddish, and Russian with equal volubility, and I suspect he originally

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turned to the theater to indulge his compulsive oratorical strain. Anyway, he'd had some success before coming to Yale, having toured with Maurice Schwartz and played bits with the Group Theatre.

My relation to Boris at that time was rather equivocal. He had enormous charisma, but I was fresh from Amherst, valued detachment, and often found Boris too truculent and engaged. We shared a certain contempt for the mushy pabulum ground out by the student playwrights at Yale, but my own stage heroes were from the Old Vic company, and my style of acting was better suited to the classics of dramatic literature than to the realistic plays that Boris favored. Nevertheless, I soon found myself drafted into the Odets group, a coterie that Boris had formed in opposition to prevailing Yale methods. Admission was simple, all you needed were three qualifications: a respect for the reforms of the defunct Group Theatre, an infinite capacity for argument, and a willingness to lend money to Boris. The loans were most crucial. Debt was Boris's natural condition, his connection with the social world. By the time the year was over I had socialized with him to the limit of my bank account.

When I met him on Houston Street a few days after his call, I noticed that he had grown more prosperous looking, but he was still stone broke. He had recruited most of the Odets group for this venture and was hauling them into a café one by one, ostensibly for individual instructions but actually to touch each individual for something to eat. When my turn came, he explained that he had decided to give the part of MacArthur to another actor. "Since you say you don't like him, I got you a better part. You'll be playing Jolson's announcer and arranger. It's a part with a lot of character, you'll love it." He ordered a second glass of tea (at my expense) and went into detail.

"You see, since Jolson's just died, Finegold's decided to exploit his popularity with the Yiddish audiences. Finegold's the manager of the theater. He's so crazy about the idea that he stayed up one night and tossed off the script himself. Frankly, it stinks. But it will only run a half hour between the other acts."

"What kind of theater does this Finegold run?" I asked.

"Difficult to describe now," said Boris. "But it's had a distinguished history. A long time ago it was a burlesque house. Then it did legitimate shows. Then it turned vaudeville. And now that the Yiddish audience is disappearing it's slowly going over to films. I guess you could say the house is in transition. In a typical program, Finegold gives the customers three movies and eight vaudeville acts—the Jolson bit will be an extra added attraction. It's a long program all right. In a theater like this, you don't attend a show, you *enlist* in it."

"You're playing Jolson?"

"Naturally."

"And MacArthur? How does he work into the story?"

"Another stroke of Finegold's," answered Boris. "MacArthur's a great hero on Second Avenue and Finegold suddenly remembered that the general had met Jolson once when he was entertaining the troops in Korea. He'd really like to work Roosevelt into it, too, but he figures he can't be too cavalier with history."

I squirmed in my chair.

"Now look," said Boris uneasily, "don't give me a hard time about the script. Just play your part with conviction and you'll be surprised—the audience will eat it up. C'mon now, I'll show you around, and then I'll introduce you to Finegold." Boris scrambled out of his chair, pocketing fifteen cents of the twenty-cent tip I left on the table.

BEFORE entering the theater, Boris called my attention to a large blowup of his face, spread from ear to ear in a huge smile. Underneath the picture, printed in block letters on the plasterboard, were his name and the appelation:

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Wunderkind. "A wonderchild in the Yiddish theater," explained Boris, who was still bitter about his perennial failure to get into the Yiddish Actors Union, "is anyone under forty-five years of age." He was very vain about his billing, but once we got inside the empty theater he lost some of his cockiness. The house dwarfed him. From the balcony we gazed down on an estate of 2,000 seats and a stage the size of the Music Hall. You could understand how much the declamatory style of Yiddish acting owed to these enormous theaters. "Twenty years ago," said Boris impressively, his voice hollow and reverent in the empty house, "Boris Thomashefsky was the idol of this stage. And when he died, they laid him out on the apron and charged admission to see the corpse. They say there were lines, three deep, right up to 14th Street."

We padded down the carpeted steps from the balcony. "I'll get the others together and we'll meet Finegold," Boris said. "I ask only one thing—restrain yourself when you see the script. Finegold has had a few successes in the legitimate theater and he's very sensitive about his writing. If you want to help me keep my job, don't hurt his feelings."

To confirm Boris's characterization of him, Finegold—a diminutive man with a pinched face, an autocratic manner, and a bad case of the sniffles—opened up the meeting with a long discussion of his career. In an oratorical voice, he affirmed that he was a misunderstood artist whose literary powers were drying up in this vulgar vaudeville atmosphere, and that only in masterworks like *The Jolson Story* (which, not unexpectedly, turned out to be the title of the skit) were his talents fully expressed. Handing around the scripts with extreme solemnity, he warned us not to deviate from the text, but rather to enrich its meanings with our most powerful performances. With Boris nodding in mock-serious agreement, we proceeded to the first reading.

The role of MacArthur had been assumed by a stiff, slightly pompous actor named Harry Steinbeck, one of the two Gentiles in the cast. The other was Marta Guardino, a tiny but fierce Italian girl with beautiful skin and night-black hair. Marta had been cast in a non-speaking Jewish role: she was to carry an Israeli flag across the stage, crossing it with an American flag carried by another actor while Jolson sang "Hatikvah"—a tableau effect of the kind that Finegold often used.

FINEGOLD had decided to improve on the Jolson movies. We too were going to use a Jolson soundtrack (we had his voice on records), but our Larry Parks was to be a split personality: Boris playing Jolson, the dramatic character, and an impersonator named Sammy imitating Jolson singing in blackface. As Jolson's announcer, I was expected to do a Smith and Dale routine with Jolson's manager, played by a laconic designer from Yale named Al Hurwitz. Our problem, with Finegold impatiently vetoing all suggestions for substitutions, was to make something funny out of the most ancient wheezes in the business.

Boris, who was giving us secret instructions about how to play to a Yiddish audience, tried to help us here, but he encountered a lot of resistance from me. He had hired me despite my skepticism and despite my lack of training in his kind of theater because I was a Jew—he thought he could burrow his way back to this essential fact. He had to cut through my standard stage diction, my trilled r's, my classical stances, and my critical detachment to the actor he hoped was underneath. "Play it true! Play it true!" he would scream at me in rehearsals. "Stop commenting on your role. You're crucifying me with your ironic readings. Don't you know I have a reputation to uphold?"

He tried to get results, the way he borrowed money, by holding me personally responsible for the advancement of his career. When this didn't work, he started to lecture me on "truth in the theater" and

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how this depended less on Finegold's lines than on my honest portrayal of character. This idea, which he had inherited from the Group Theatre, was blasphemy to me, an open invitation for the playwright to write badly. He countered that I was overeducated. I replied that he had an affection for clumsy plays. He spoke about visceral emotion. I talked about ideas. It was a debate that continued past the rehearsal hours, an argument that went on late into the night.

During the rehearsal period, we got to see a lot of Yiddish vaudeville, most of which was heavily influenced by TV variety shows. But one exceptional artist appeared on the program—an old-timer named Aaron Lebedoff, in whose work there was substantial evidence that Yiddish vaudeville had once had its own special style and genius. His record, "Rumania, Rumania," was a great favorite in the Yiddish community; and when he sang the song in the theater, you could tell that he had been an important influence on Danny Kaye. He was aging then, but his mighty talent was still intact. With his face absolutely impassive, except for his expressive eyebrows, he wrapped his voice around his listeners and almost literally squeezed a response out of them. He put all his dissatisfaction with life and experience into his singing, and the audience went with him all the way. He sobbed with the song and they sobbed with him—oh, how they loved to cry. And when, after innumerable encores, he finally bore his shaking figure off the stage, he snapped out of the mood immediately—like Garrick winking at a lady in a box after a supremely tragic moment—and aimed a good-hearted goose at Marta Guardino, watching admiringly from the wings.

On the day of our first performance, we sat through the three movies as well, to which the audience paid no attention at all. Local conversations were bursting out all over the house. Almost everyone had a basket of food on his lap and, though it was barely 3 P.M., some were already eating. A woman to my left had put her feet over the seat in front of her and gone off to sleep; a man behind me was calling in loud stage whispers to someone he recognized in front. I felt my usual opening night jitters enlarging into a full-scale panic.

For, with the exception of the Jolson records, none of our show was amplified, and, considering all the noise in the audience, I hadn't the vaguest idea of how we were going to be heard. As it was, the theater was so large that every line had to be shouted. No modern actor likes to look into the house any more than necessary; yet we had no choice but to stare the audience down on every speech. The technique was to start off a line, directing it at the character we were addressing—"Hymie!"—then to swivel around, front the audience, and bellow the rest toward the gallery: "THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO TELL YOU!" Direct address, we were told, was a convention the audience willingly accepted, but it played havoc with our notions of the fourth wall.

Backstage, Boris explained the audience and what seemed to us its rather bizarre behavior. "These spectators are the most demanding you'll ever face. They come in for half price—it's Friday and they have to see the entire show before sundown. All that eating is going to continue right through your performance. Don't worry about it, it's traditional. This bunch has been coming here regularly for years. They're very skeptical, but at the same time they're easily moved. Nothing is really going to upset them except a phony performance. Don't worry about the script; they're not here to judge literary values. If the situation is one they can recognize, they'll buy it. What they like best though is powerful acting. So play it true, project a lot of warmth, and, if you can manage it, give them a good cry."

Not very heartened, I went up to my "dressing room," which was really the men's john, hastily converted to accommo-

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date some of the extra cast. I sat next to Sammy, the Jolson impersonator, and watched him apply the complex facial paraphernalia of the black-faced minstrel man. Under the cork, his eyes and teeth became very white, and, making mouths in the mirror, he suddenly erupted into one of those extended sheep noises which are the stock-in-trade of everyone who imitates Jolson, waving his white-gloved hands beside his face. Well, he had a character, but Finegold had neglected to write a character for me, so I decided to play myself with whatever conviction I could muster, and I made up my face accordingly.

A few minutes later, we all took our places behind the curtain. The technicians were still setting the lights. We had never had a dress rehearsal and had never worked with props; but considering the improvisational nature of the whole affair, I guess we were lucky even to have written lines. During the hiatus, Finegold was making a speech out front and even getting a few laughs. When this was over, the houselights went down, the curtain rose, and we found ourselves staring into a couple of thousand expectant faces.

The opening scene was located "somewhere in Korea," the Korean atmosphere signified by a paper moon, a cut-out palm tree, General MacArthur, and a few extras in khaki shirts. Center stage was Sammy in blackface, gesticulating wildly into a dead microphone in synchronization with a record of Jolson singing "Sewanee." The song over, Sammy bowed and exited, and Finegold cut in with the applause record. This was my cue. Leaping from my seat, I grabbed the dummy microphone and waved for silence from the audience. The applause record died suddenly—Finegold was very heavy with the sound effects. At the top of my lungs I proceeded with a short harangue about how great Al feels to be out here in Korea, entertaining the troops and doing his duty as an American—and in tribute to the exuberance of the reception, he was going to sing another song. The applause was again put on the turntable, after which Sammy gestured through "Sonny Boy," a record which had an unfortunate tic from the rim to the label. As the music jumped a couple of bars with each revolution of the disc, Sammy's eyes grew desperate, and I found myself getting more and more nervous.

After the song, Sammy made an overhurried dash for the wings while I announced that Jolson was now going to honor the audience with a speech. This was the cue for Boris's entrance. He emerged from the wings where Sammy had exited, wiping his face with a towel as if he were just removing the last trace of cork. He grabbed the mike with an assurance that I envied, showed his teeth to the audience in a broad smile, and began lecturing the spectators as if they were Korean soldiers.

"General MacArthur and fellows. I just want to take a few minutes to tell you what a great and wonderful honor it is for me to be here among you wonderful fellows who are every day shedding your blood for democracy. At times like this, I feel proud—proud to be an American Jew. Like you fellows here, I am ready to give every drop of my Jewish blood to help win this war. I was just talking with your general here, and that talk brought back memories to me which have gone deep in my heart. I mean the days when I was a poor Jew living in the Bronx." (Finegold, who prided himself on being a shrewd psychologist of Yiddish audiences, was certain that the success of his script was largely dependent on the number of times it mentioned the word *Jew*.) "That talk," Boris continued, "brought back memories of my Jewish Mama and Papa and how they wanted, with all their hearts, I should become a *chazan* in the synagogue. I remember those poor dead parents of mine, may their souls rest in peace, like it was yesterday. And I remember the fights we used to have over

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me becoming a jazz singer. Yes, I remember them well. . . ."

THE lights, which had begun to fade during Boris's speech, now blacked out completely, and we groped our way offstage in darkness while the set was changed. After having seen a few of his own movies, Finegold had discovered the flashback technique, and he was now introducing it into the Yiddish theater with experimental fervor. The lights came up on what was supposed to be Jolson's home in the Bronx, forty or fifty years before the Korean action. Finegold gave us a rest here and brought in the Yiddish-speaking professionals; and, at last, the audience began to show signs of consciousness.

There were three people on stage: Mama, Papa, and a comic named Yankele who was supposed to be an uncle (I later learned there is always a character named Yankele who is supposed to be an uncle—he is a stock figure like Sganerelle and Harlequin). Papa and Yankele began ad-libbing gags which, so far as I could tell, were irrelevant to the plot, but which drew explosive laughs from the audience. When they felt the audience slacken, their conversation turned to Asa. He was giving his father great *tsores* with his *meshuggeneh,* notions about being a *teaterzinger.* Mama defended Asa, but Papa indignantly told her to shut up and mind her own business. His face reddening, Papa proclaimed that if this *geschmatter yid* ever showed his face in the house again he would throw him straight into the garbage. Enter Boris, with his shirt sleeves rolled up (a touch intended to make him look forty years younger).

Mama, with a bone-crushing hug, indicated that she at least still loved him in spite of his renegade profession. But when he held out his hand to Papa, it was vigorously slapped down. A short duet followed between Boris and Papa: Boris pleading, meek, and respectful; Papa autocratic and unyielding.

Throughout the latter part of this scene, I had become aware of another voice on stage, gabbling through the actors' speeches, which was growing in volume and vigor as the scene progressed. But it took me a little time to discover its source. It was coming from the prompter, a dome-headed little man in an open shirt, who was sitting serenely in his cubicle, declaiming every line of the script with histrionic flourishes of his arms as if he were the only person on stage. When Boris, after a tearful exit, came into the wings, I pressed him urgently for an explanation.

"Don't worry about him," he said, wiping away his sweat and powdering his make-up. "He's your insurance policy. He reads the script aloud at the same pace you do, and if you ever blow a line, you pick it up from him as you go along."

"Look, wonderboy," I growled, with some rancor, "I'm having enough trouble with these lines. I'll be sure to dry up altogether if he doesn't keep quiet."

"Please, don't give me a hard time," answered Boris. "He doesn't prompt in English. Anyway," he added impatiently, "you should learn how to adjust to the conditions you work in. What kind of actor are you?"

Digesting his rebuke, I turned my attention back to the stage. Mama, Papa, and the prompter were having a debate: Mama conciliatory, Papa adamant, the prompter alternately conciliatory and adamant. Papa and the prompter absolutely refused to have any *teaterzingers* in the house and that was their last word. Mama and the prompter wanted Papa to stop being stiff-necked and give Asa one more chance. Boris made another entrance to pick up his luggage, and Mama again planted a kiss on his mouth. At Mama's secret signal, Boris held out his hand once more to Papa, who once more refused it, though with somewhat less conviction. Boris walked sadly and melodramatically to the door, opened it, and gave one last tearful look at Papa. Suddenly, Papa threw out his arms and let out a heart-rending cry: *Asa!* With two tons of water

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cascading from his voice, Boris yelped, *Papa!* and the two rushed center stage to embrace. While they groped each other like two wrestling bears, the audience let out an audible gasp of approval, and the prompter wiped his brow. Reconciliation between father and son. Blackout.

DURING the set change, Finegold's tableau of Israeli and American flags passed irrelevantly in front of the curtain, the audience applauding right through Jolson's rendering of "Hatikvah."

The next scene was a flash forward to New York, forty years later, right after the Korean expedition. It was a moment that Al Hurwitz and I had been dreading for four days, for the two of us were alone on stage with Finegold's jokes.

"Hymie, I could use a drink," I said, brightly and loudly.

"Yeah," answered Al, "was there ever a time when you couldn't use a drink?"

"Sure," I answered, shrinking inwardly, "when I'm asleep."

Silence from the house. We picked up on it again.

"Let's play some rummy," said Al.

"You're always playing rummy," said I.

"Yeah? Well, better to play rummy than be a rummy," said Al.

The audience let that one ride too.

After a few more side-splitters of this type, we turned back, with relief, to the plot and discussed Jolson's failing health. We both agreed that he looked exceedingly pale and ought to get a check-up.

"You know, Hymie," I offered, to emphasize my concern, "every time I look at Al, I shiver in the *kishkes.*" There was a lone hoot from somewhere in the fourth row.

Boris entered and we both told him he ought to visit a doctor. "No, boys," he answered bravely, "you wouldn't want me to let down those Jewish boys over there in Korea or those Jewish folks at home who are expecting me to give everything I got for the war effort?" He did admit, however, that he wasn't feeling too good, and a blackout prepared us for Boris's big scene.

He was seated in a chair, full front, with his collar open, Al and I supporting him on both sides.

"I'm goin' boys," said Boris, gasping for breath, "I'm goin' fast." It was a death scene, but in trying to illustrate his agony, Boris had bared his countless teeth in what looked like a fulsome, jovial smile. I felt a bubble of laughter beginning to form in my throat. "I'm remembering my life," continued Boris. "They say when you're dying, you begin to see your life parade before you." Actually, Boris's life was beginning to parade *behind* him, in single file in back of his chair. "Hey, there's Mama," said Boris, suddenly sitting up straight. "And Papa, too. Look, there's poor dead Papa. Hey, Mama, Papa, look here, don't you recognize me? I'm your son, Asa. Remember when I sang for you 'The Anniversary Song' and you waltzed together in the new house I bought for you?" The record played as Boris proceeded to die some more; then it faded under. "And look! There's General MacArthur." Harry Steinbeck, wearing a faded private's shirt with five stars painted on the shoulders, appeared behind the chair, compressing his lips around his corncob in sorrow. "Ah, General MacArthur. With President Truman he only spent an hour—but with me he spent *two*!"

Boris was going into his death rattle. The closer to death he came, the wider grew his grin. Now it looked to me as if it were going to swallow up his face. "I'm goin' boys, I can feel myself goin'." He was gripping the arms of the chair and pumping himself up and down in it. "No, Al," we cried in unison, "you can't go. We need you too much. The country needs you."

"This is it," Boris concluded. "I—got—no—pulse." His head was now over the back of the chair and he was pumping harder than ever. The bubble that had been forming in me finally burst and I let

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out a huge cough in a last effort to quell it.

But it was careening around in my throat, ripping out of my nose. I was trying desperately to glaze my eyes because I couldn't look anywhere without busting up entirely, neither at Al Hurwitz, who was having trouble himself, nor at Boris who lay on the chair—dead—with a grotesque smile splitting his face from ear to ear. It suddenly occurred to me that my only chance was to bury my head on Boris's corpse and stifle my painful gasps on his shoulder. Boris shifted uncomfortably under my weight, twisted his mouth around, and began to whisper fiercely in my ear. "What in hell you doing? Stop screwing up the death scene!" I burrowed my head even further into his arms and struggled for control.

All this time, MacArthur was delivering a eulogy: "Al Jolson, you are gone. You were a great American, a true soldier, and an honor to the Jews." When I felt Al Hurwitz bring his head down on Boris's other shoulder, I knew that we both were done for. Tears of laughter had swarmed into my eyes—and then it suddenly occurred to me how I might salvage the situation. Tears, after all, were tears, no matter how they were inspired, and it was not too fantastic, considering the magnitude of Yiddish stage emotions, that my heaving on Boris's shoulder might have been interpreted as sobs of grief. When I finally got control of myself, I tested this theory by presenting my tear-stained face to the audience, and was rewarded by a little gasp from that part of the house near enough to see me. Even Boris was stirred. "That part was pretty good," he told me, after we had squeezed two curtain calls out of the audience, "but don't try to run off with the scene." He punched me affectionately on the arm. "What did I tell you? Even this junk carries if you play it with the proper spirit."

I was never able, in the six shows that followed, to repeat this singular triumph, but I am sure my performance improved. For I began to play my part with a greater degree of seriousness and intensity—not much, I confess, but more than I had ever been able to lavish on such a role before. In my inner ear, I was hearing Boris shout again, "Play it true! Play it true!" and there was still enough shame in me to see the justice of his demand. Though my skepticism never completely left me, I held it for a while in partial suspension, in homage to something which had brushed by from another world—the Second Avenue Muse, then growing rapidly more shabby and *déclassée,* but still hovering hopefully over the stage. Around Boris, the Muse still lived, and I watched with grudging admiration, amusement, and a little envy as he wrapped himself snugly in the folds of its gown.

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SIDNEY HOOK

Pragmatism & the Tragic Sense of Life

IN THE realm of thought and culture America has largely been a colonial dependency of Europe. Its own authentic history—the conquest of a virgin continent, the bloodiest of all civil wars, the technological revolution, the extension of social democracy—has not been reflected in a characteristic philosophy of life. As the pioneer settlements struggled across river and mountain, New England divines were still wrestling with age-old problems of freedom and predestination. When the nation was locked in arms over the issue of slavery, its leading teachers were still justifying the ways of God to man while the more daring were beginning to unwind the cobwebby speculations of German idealistic philosophy. Only toward the end of the 19th century did a distinctively American philosophy emerge. The names associated with it were Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. This philosophy was labeled pragmatism or instrumentalism or experimentalism.

Pragmatism was regarded as a distinctively American philosophy, despite its European congeners, because it stressed three things: the universe was open—therefore possibilities were real; the future depended in part upon what human beings did or left undone—therefore man was not a slave of scientific or theological necessity; ideas were potentially plans of action—therefore thinking could and did make a difference to human affairs. This emphasis on action became central in the interpretation of pragmatism and before long action was identified with practice and—fateful step!—practice with usefulness. Since Americans were considered a practical people with a highly developed sense of the concrete and useful, pragmatism was played up abroad as the American philosophy par excellence. Its claim that all thinking which aimed to win new knowledge involved some practice or experiment was transformed into the belief that all thinking was for the sake of practice. And since the chief practice of Americans seemed to be in the eyes of their poorer neighbors the making of money, pragmatism was cried down as the typical philosophy of a *parvenu* people, insensitive to tradition and culture, and devoted only to the invention of machines to make more machines by human beings who acted as if they were themselves only complicated machines.

This European conception of pragmatism reached American shores and infected some of the more tender-minded intellectuals who attributed their ineffectuality not to their own failings but to the addiction of the American people to the philosophy of pragmatism. It is now an almost unchallenged commonplace that pragmatism is a superficial philosophy of optim-

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ism, of uncritical adjustment and conformity, of worship of the goddess success. Such an interpretation of pragmatism not only runs counter to what we know of the personalities of Peirce, James, and Dewey, but is based upon a tendentious reading of their work.

What was overlooked in this caricatured account is that the very nature of philosophy, as the pragmatic philosophers conceive it, makes it a method of clarifying ideas and therefore preeminently a method of *criticism*. It is death on bunkum and pretentious abstractions especially when they are capitalized as Success or Historical Destiny or Reality. It clarifies the meaning of ideas by uncovering their consequences in use — not merely consequences in linguistic use but in the behavior of things and people in the concrete situations in which language functions. Long before Wittgenstein, pragmatists believed that language was a form of life. It reduces differences concerning supposed first principles and ultimate necessities to their varied fruits and consequences in experience.

Pragmatism was not only a method of clarifying ideas by exploring their consequences in behavioral use. It was also a temper of mind toward the vital options which men confront when they become aware of what alternative proposals commit them to. It stressed the efficacy of human ideals and actions and at the same time their inescapable limitations. It forswore the promise of total solutions and wholesale salvation for piecemeal gains. Yet far from embracing easy formulae of the ultimate reconciliation of conflicting interests and values, it acknowledged the reality of piecemeal losses even when we risk our lives to achieve the gains. No matter how intelligent and humane our choices, there are, William James insists, "real losses and real losers." We live in a dangerous and adventurous and serious world and "the very 'seriousness,'" James goes on to say, "we attribute to life means that ineluctable noes and losses form part of it, that there are genuine sacrifices, and that something permanently drastic and bitter always remains at the bottom of the cup."

This aspect of the philosophy of pragmatism has been almost completely ignored by its critics. It seems to me, however, to be central in pragmatism and to provide an illuminating perspective from which to survey the problems and predicaments of men. It is grounded in a recognition of the tragic sense of life.

THE juxtaposition of the expressions "pragmatism" and "the tragic sense of life" may appear bewildering to those who have uncritically swallowed the conventional interpretation of pragmatism as the philosophy of a grasping opportunism. It will also startle those who identify "the tragic sense of life" with the title of the famous book of the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, whose theme song was a lament that man was not immortal. To speak of pragmatism and the tragic sense of life is somewhat like speaking of the Buddhism of John Dewey or the Dewey Nobody Knows.

I am not aware that John Dewey ever used the phrase "the tragic sense of life," but I know that growing up in the shadows and aftermath of the Civil War he keenly felt what I shall describe by it, and that it is implied in his account of moral experience. Nothing of moment, however, depends upon an exegesis of his writings. As a pragmatist I take responsibility for the interpretation and its application. It is a perspective which seems to me to illumine the pragmatic view that problems of normative social inquiry—morals in the broad sense—constitute the primary subject matter of philosophy, and that reason or intelligence understood as the comprehensive pattern of scientific inquiry can and should be used to resolve them.

By the tragic sense of life I do not mean merely sensitivity to the presence of evil or suffering in the world, although all tragic situations to some degree involve one or

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the other. And since I have mentioned Buddha I should like to say that the presence of the evils in the world which led Buddha to surrender his kingdom to seek salvation for himself and mankind are not to me the realities fundamental to the tragic sense of life.

There were three things in Buddha's experience, reflection upon which led him to a renunciation of his princely lot and a quest for liberation from desire and incarnate existence—sickness, old age, and death. One can very well understand why, in the world in which he lived and for many centuries thereafter, these phenomena loomed so large in the overpopulated and poverty-stricken areas of Asia. Nonetheless if we are to distinguish between the sense of the *pitiful* and the sense of the *tragic*—sickness, old age, and even many forms of death, despite their numbing effect upon human sensibility, are not necessarily to be classified as tragic.

Given the rapidly expanding horizons of knowledge in our age, there is nothing in the nature of things which requires that the sick, any more than the poor, must always be with us. If scientific medicine develops at the same pace in the next few hundred years as it has in the last century, it is not shallow optimism to anticipate that the most serious forms of sickness will disappear and not be replaced by others. Even where sickness is present it may be the occasion of tragedy but by itself is not an illustration of it. In relation to forces of nature, man's lot may appear pitiful; but the tragic is a moral phenomenon.

What is true of sickness is true of old age. The aged arouse our compassion because of their feebleness and fragility—and the multiplicity of their aches and pains. When these are absent, and this, too, is a concern of scientific medicine, there is a chance for serenity, wisdom, and beauty of spirit to manifest themselves. There is sometimes a grandeur and stateliness about an old tree which aged persons do not possess because the processes of physical degeneration, and the consequent weakening of the vital powers, make man pitiful. There is no tragedy in growing old biologically but only sorrow—the element of the tragic enters in the defeat of plans or hopes, in the realization that in much grief there is not much wisdom, and that we cannot count merely upon the passage of time alone to diminish our stupidities and cruelties.

But what of death—Buddha's third appalling discovery—preoccupation with which has become so fashionable today among some European existentialist philosophers that their philosophy seems to be more a meditation upon death than life? Is not death the ultimate source of whatever is tragic in life? I cannot bring myself to think so. Nor can I convince myself that its nature and significance in life waited to be discovered by Kierkegaard and Heidegger and their modern disciples.

It is the reflective attitude toward death, not the popular attitude or the one displayed by those in its last agonies, which throws light on its nature and place in life. The attitude exhibited by Socrates in facing it seems wiser than that expressed by the contemnors of the rational life, who, not content with talking about what they find when they look into themselves, inflate it into a universal trait of the human psyche. So Tolstoy, who is quoted by existentialist writers, says: "If a man has learned to think, no matter what he may think about, he is always thinking of his own death. All philosophers are like that. And what truth can there be, if there is death?" Logically, of course, this makes no more sense than the even more extreme statement of Sartre that "if we must die then our life has no meaning," which, to those who solve some problems in life and therefore find some meaning, might be taken as a premise in a new short proof of human immortality. All this, it seems to me, expresses little more than a fear of death and a craving for immortality. It is a commonplace observation, however, that most human beings who desire immortality

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desire not unending life but unending youth or other desirable qualities which life makes possible. The fable of Juno and her lover, in which Juno petitions the gods to take back the gift of eternal life they had conferred upon a mortal, indicates that the Greeks knew a life without end could be a dubious blessing. And in this respect the Hellenes were wiser than the Hebrews whose God drives Adam from Paradise after he had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge to hinder him from eating of the fruit of the tree of eternal life. Agony over death strikes me as one of the unloveliest features of the intellectual life of our times—and certainly unworthy of any philosophy which conceives itself as a quest for wisdom. It has never been clear to me why those who are nauseated by life, not by this or that kind of life but any kind of life, should be so fearful of death.

Wisdom is knowledge of the uses of life and death. The uses of life are to be found in the consummatory experiences of vision and delight, of love, understanding, art, friendship, and creative activity. That is why in a contingent world of finite men, vulnerable to powers they cannot control which sometimes robs them of the possibility of any justifying consummations, death has its uses, too. For it gives us some assurance that no evil or suffering lasts forever. To anyone aware of the multitude of infamies and injustices which men have endured, of the broken bodies and tortured minds of the victims of these cruelties, of the multiple dimensions of pain in which millions lie on mattress graves or with minds shrouded in darkness, death must sometimes appear as a beneficent release, not an inconsolable affliction. It washes the earth clean of what cannot be cleansed in any other way. Not all the bright promises of a future free of these stains of horror can redeem by one iota the lot of those who will not live to see the dawn of the new day.

It is nobler to exist and struggle in a world in which there is always a vital option to live or die. The fear of death, the desire to survive at any cost or price in human degradation, has been the greatest ally of tyranny, past and present. "There are times," says Woodbridge, "when a man ought to be more afraid of living than of dying." And we may add, there are situations in which because of the conditions of survival, the worst thing we can know of anyone is that he has survived. We have known such times and situations. They may come again.

Even in a world in which all injustices, cruelties, and physical anguish have disappeared, the possibility of withdrawing from it makes the world insofar forth a better and a freer world. So long as we retain possession of our faculties, our decision to remain in the world indicates a participating responsibility on our part for those events within it which our continuance effects. If human beings were unable to die, they would to that extent be unfree. Man shares a *conatus sui esse persevare* with everything else in the world or at least with all other sentient beings. But just because he can on rational grounds give up his being, choose not to be, he differentiates himself most strikingly from his fellow creatures in nature. I conclude therefore that death as such is not a tragic phenomenon and that its presence does not make the world and our experience within it tragic. It would be truer to call tragic a world in which men wanted to die but couldn't.

WHAT, then, do I mean by the tragic sense of life, and what is its relevance to pragmatism? I mean by the tragic sense a very simple thing which is rooted in the very nature of the moral experience and the phenomenon of moral choice. Every genuine experience of moral doubt and perplexity in which we ask: "What should I do?" takes place in a situation where good conflicts with good. If we already know what is evil, the moral inquiry is over or it never really begins. "The worse or evil," says Dewey, "is the rejected good," but until we reject it, the situation is one

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in which apparent good opposes apparent good. "All the serious perplexities of life come back to the genuine difficulty of forming a judgment as to the values of a situation: they come back to a conflict of goods." No matter how we resolve the opposition, some good will be sacrificed, some interest, whose immediate craving for satisfaction may be every whit as intense and authentic as its fellows, will be modified, frustrated, or even suppressed. Where the goods involved are of a relatively low order, like decisions about what to eat, where to live, where to go, the choice is unimportant except to the mind of a child. There are small tragedies as there are small deaths. At any level the conflict of values must become momentous to oneself or others to convey adequately the tragic quality. Where the choice is between goods that are complex in structure and consequential for the future, the tragic quality of the moral dilemma emerges more clearly. And when it involves basic choices of love, friendship, vocations, the quality becomes poignant.

The very nature of the self as expressed in habits, dispositions, and character is to some extent altered by these decisions. No matter how justified in smug retrospect our moral decisions seem to have been, only the unimaginative will fail to see the possible selves we have sacrificed to become what we are. Grant that all regrets are vain, that any other choice would have been equally or more regretted, the selves we might have been are eloquent witnesses of values we failed to enjoy. If "Hell is truth seen too late," as Hobbes says, we all have lived in it. If we have played it safe and made our existence apparently secure, the fascinating experience of a life of adventure and experience can never be ours, and every thought of a good fight missed will be accompanied by a pang. William James reminds us that it is a poor spirit who does not sense the chagrin of the tardy Crillon, who arriving when the battle is over is greeted by Henry IV with the words: "Hang yourself, brave Crillon! We fought at Arques, and you were not there!" On the other hand, if we have scorned to put down our roots, hugged our liberty tightly to ourselves by refusing to give hostages to fortune, and have become crusaders or martyrs for lost causes, we have thrust from ourselves the warmth of sustained affection, and the comforting regularities which can best heal the bruised spirit.

THERE is a conflict not only between the good and the good but between the good and the right where the good is a generic term for all the values in a situation and the right for all the obligations. The *concepts* of good and right are irreducible to each other in ordinary use. We are often convinced we must fulfill a certain duty even when we are far from convinced to the same degree that the action, or the rule it exemplifies, will achieve the greatest good. The "good" is related to the reflective satisfaction of an interest; the "right" to the fulfillment of a binding demand or rule of the community. There is no moral problem when in doing the right thing we can see that it *also* leads to the greatest good or when striving for the greatest good conforms to our sense of what is right. But the acute ethical problems arise when in the pursuit of the good we do things which appear not to be right—as when in order to avoid the dangers of war a nation repudiates its treaty obligations or when in the war effort noncombatants are punished who are in no way responsible for the actions of others. They also arise when our doing what is right may be likely to result in evil consequences—as when a dangerous killer, whose guilt is plain, is set free on a legal technicality, or when the refusal to surrender to the unjust claims of an aggressor threatens to lead to wholesale slaughter. Many have been the attempts made to escape the antinomies between the right and the good by defining the good as the object of right or the right merely as the means to the good. All have failed. To act upon the

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right no matter what its consequences for human weal or woe seems inhuman, at times insane. The thirst for righteousness has too often been an angry thirst satisfied if at all by long draughts of blood. On the other hand, the attempt to do good by *any* means, no matter how unjust, is subhuman and usually irrational.

AS COMPARED TO traditional ethical doctrines, ideal utilitarianism reaches farthest in our quest for an adequate ethics, but in the end it must be rejected, too. And it was the pragmatist and pluralist, William James, long before Pritchard and Ross, who indicated why in the famous question he asked: "If the hypothesis were offered us of a world in which Messrs. Fourier's and Bellamy's and Morris's Utopia should all be outdone, and millions be kept permanently happy on the one simple condition that a certain lost soul on the far-off edge of things should lead a life of lonely torture, what except a specifical and independent sort of emotion can it be which would make us immediately feel. . .how hideous a thing would be its enjoyment when deliberately accepted as the fruit of such a bargain?" The situation is unaltered if we recognize that there are other goods besides happiness and that justice is itself a good, because in that case the conflict breaks out again between good and good. In this connection I would venture the statement that it is the failure to see the radical pluralism in the nature of the goods which are reckoned in the consequences of an action that accounts for two extreme views. The first is G. E. Moore's view that it is self-evident that it can *never* be right knowingly to approve an action that would make the world as a whole worse than some alternative action. The second is Kant's view that there are some duties that it would *always* be right to perform, even if the consequences of the action resulted in a worse world or in no world at all. No specific rule can be laid down as absolutely binding in advance either way. Nothing can take the place of intelligence. The better or the lesser evil in each situation can be best defined as the object of reflective choice. Even the decision in the stock illustration of the textbooks whether to execute an innocent man or turn him over to be tortured in order to save the community from destruction must depend upon a complex of circumstances. It is perfectly conceivable that an unjust act will sometimes produce the greater good or the lesser evil. It is sometimes necessary to burn down a house to save a village. Although when applied to human beings the logic seems damnable, few are prepared to take the position of Kant in those agonizing moral predicaments that are not uncommon in history, especially the history of oppressed minority peoples, in which the survival of the group can be purchased only at the price of the pain, degradation, and death of the innocent. No matter how we choose, we must either betray the ideal of the greater good or the ideal of right or justice. In this lies the agony of the choice.

Many have been the attempts to escape the guilt of that choice. I cite one from the past. During the Middle Ages, Maimonides, writing on the Laws of the Torah to guide his people, discusses what a community is to do when it is beset by enemies who demand the life of one man with the threat to kill all if he be not turned over to them. Maimonides teaches that they are to refuse to turn over any man even if all must die in consequence, except if their enemies call out the name of a specific person. I had heard this teaching defended on the ground that if a community itself had to make the decision who was to die, it would be taking the guilt of an innocent man's death upon itself, which is impermissible. But if the enemy names the man, then he can be turned over because the guilt and sin fall now on *their* heads. By this miserable evasion it was thought that the tragic choice could be avoided. But it turns out that Maimonides has been misread. What Maimonides really taught is that only if the name

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of the person who has been called out is of one already under the death sentence for his crimes, should he be surrendered. But never an innocent man.

If anything, human beings are more readily inclined to sacrifice the right to the good than the good to the right, especially in revolutionary situations which have developed because of grievances too long unmet. It can easily be shown that it was Lenin's conception of Communist ethics which implicitly defined the right action as consisting in doing *anything*—literally anything—that would bring victory in the class struggle, which explains the transformation of a whole generation of idealists into hangmen. In fact the health of the revolution, whether in the times of Robespierre or Castro, never really requires the holocaust of victims offered up to it. But no revolution including our own has ever been achieved without injustice to someone. However the conflict between the principles of right and the values of good be theoretically resolved, in every concrete situation it leads to some abridgment of principle or some diminution of value.

The most dramatic of all moral conflicts is not between good and good, or between good and right, but between right and right. This in its starkest form is the theme of Sophoclean tragedy, but the primary locus of the tragic situation is not in a play but in life, in law, and in history. Innocence in personal matters consists in overlooking the conflict of moral duties and obligations. Innocence in political matters, the characteristic of ritualistic liberalism, consists in failing to see the conflicts of rights in our Bill of Rights and the necessity of their intelligent adjustment. In our own country we have witnessed again and again the antinomy of rights revealed in divided loyalties, in the conflict between allegiance to the laws of the state and allegiance to what is called divine law or natural law or the dictates of conscience. On the international scene it is expressed in the conflict of incompatible national claims, each with *some* measure of justification.

Irony is compounded with tragedy in the fact that many of the rights we presently enjoy we owe to our ancestors who, in the process of winning them for us, deprived others of their rights. In some regions of the world the very ground on which people stand was expropriated by force and fraud from others by their ancestors. Yet as a rule it would be a new injustice to seek to redress the original injustice by depriving those of their possessions who hold present title to them. Every just demand for reparations against an aggressor country is an unjust demand on the descendants of its citizens who as infants were not responsible for the deeds of aggression. That is why history is the arena of the profoundest moral conflicts in which some legitimate right has always been sacrificed, sometimes gently by legislation, sometimes brutally on the altars of the gods of war and revolution.

The Christian and especially the Buddhist ethics of purity which seeks to transcend this conflict and avoid guilt by refusal to violate anyone's right in such situations, can only do so by withdrawing from the plane of the ethical altogether. This may succeed in God's eyes but not in man's. The Buddhist saint or any other who out of respect for the right to life of man or beast refuses ever to use force, refuses even to kill, even when this is the only method, as it sometimes is, that will save multitudes from suffering and death, makes himself responsible for the greater evil, all the more so because he claims to be acting out of compassion. He cannot avoid guilt whether we regard him as more than man or less than man. No more than we does he escape the tragic decision.

THERE are three generic approaches to the tragic conflicts of life. The first approach is that of history. The second is that of love. The third is that of creative intelligence in quest for ways of mediation which I call here the pragmatic.

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The approach of history is best typified by Hegel precisely because he tries to put a gloss of reason over the terrible events which constitute so much of the historical process. Its upshot is woefully inept to its intent. It suggests not only that whatever cause wins and *however* it wins, is more just than the cause which is defeated, but that the loser is the more wicked and not merely weaker. Further, it calls into question the very fact of tragic conflict from which it so perceptively starts. No one has seen more profoundly than Hegel into the nature of the tragic situation and its stark clash of equally legitimate rights. But his solution, expressed in Schiller's dictum *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht,* as Hegel develops it, makes the philosophy of history a theodicy, an exercise in apologetics. It thereby vulgarizes tragedy. For it attempts to console man with a dialectical proof that his agony and defeat are not really evils but necessary elements in the goodness of the whole. The position is essentially religious. No monotheistic religion which conceives of God as both omnipotent and benevolent, no metaphysics which asserts that the world is rational, necessary, and good has any room for genuine tragedy.

The approach of love is incomplete and ambiguous. It is incomplete because if love is more than a feeling of diffused sympathy and is expressed in preferential action, no *man* can love everyone or identify himself with every interest. Empirically love has produced as much disunity as unity in the world—not only in Troy but in Jerusalem. Injustice is often born of love, not only of self-love but of love of some rather than others.

Love is not only incomplete but ambiguous. There are various kinds of love and the actions to which they lead may be incompatible. An order or distinction is required. A man's love for his family must be discriminatory; his love of mankind not. He cannot love both in the same way without denying one or the other. The quality of love is altered with the range of its generalization. In one sense love always shows a bias which reinforces some conflicting interest; in another it gives all conflicting values its blessing without indicating any specific mode of action by which conflict can be mediated. Love may enable a person to live with the burden of guilt which he assumes when he sacrifices one right to another. But it is no guide to social conflict as the last two thousand years have shown. Because the Lord loves men equally nothing follows logically about the equality of men before the law. "The *Agape* quality of love," says Tillich, "sees man as God sees him." But what *man* can tell us how *God* sees man? "Agape," continues Tillich, "loves in everybody and through everybody love itself." Karl Barth speaks here more simply and intelligibly when he claims that such love has no bearing whatsoever on the organization of any human society. For Barth God loves Stalin as much as Stalin's victims. Although one may say that this tells us more about Barth than about God, it is clearer that Barth's brutal neutralism can be condemned on moral rather than on theological grounds.

FINALLY there is the method of creative intelligence. It, too, tries to make it possible for men to live with the tragic conflict of goods and rights and duties, to mediate not by arbitrary fiat but through informed and responsible decision. Whoever uses this method must find his way among all the conflicting claims. He must therefore give each one of them and the interests it represents tongue or voice. Every claimant therefore has a right to be heard. The hope is that as much as possible of each claim may be incorporated in some inclusive or shared interest which is accepted because the alternatives are less satisfactory. To this end we investigate its every relevant feature, the conditions of its emergence, its proximate causes and consequences, the costs of gratifying it, the available alternatives and *their* costs. Every mediation entails some sacrifice.

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The quest for the unique good of the situation, for what is to be done here and now, may be better than anything else available but it, too, is also the lesser evil. It is a lesser evil, whether found in a compromise or in moderating the demand of a just claim or learning to live peacefully with one's differences, on the same general principle that tells us that a divorce is better for all parties concerned than a murder. In every case the rules, the wisdom, the lessons of the past are to be applied, but they have presumptive, not final, validity because they may be challenged by new presumptions. "The pragmatic import of the logic of individualized situations," says Dewey, "is to transfer the attention of theory from preoccupation with general conceptions to the problem of developing effective methods of inquiry," and applying them. It is a logic which does not preach solutions but explores the suggestions which emerge from the analyses of problems. Its categorical imperative is to inquire, to reason together, to seek in every crisis the creative devices and inventions that will not only make life fuller and richer but tragedy bearable. William James makes the same point as Dewey in the language of ideals. Since in the struggles between ideals, "victory and defeat there must be, the victory to be philosophically prayed for is that of the more inclusive side—of the side which even in the hour of triumph will to some degree *do justice* to the ideals in which the vanquished interests lay. . . ." But prayer is not enough. He goes on *"Invent some manner* of realizing your own ideals which will also satisfy the alien demands—that and that only is the path of peace." To which we must add, provided there is a reciprocal will to peace in the matter. And even then, your own or the alien demands or both must be curtailed.

This pragmatic approach to the moral problem can not only be squared with the recognition of tragic conflicts, of troubles, minor and grave, which dog the life of man in a precarious world, it gets its chief justification from such recognition. Intelligence may be optimistic when it deals with the control of things, but the moral life by its very nature forbids the levity and superficiality which has often been attributed to the pragmatic approach by its unimaginative critics.

INDEED I make bold to claim that the pragmatic approach to tragedy is more serious, even more heroic, than any other approach because it does not resign itself to the bare fact of tragedy or take easy ways out at the price of truth. Where death does not result from the tragic situation, there are always consequences for continued living which it takes responsibly, without yielding to despair. It does not conceive of tragedy as a preordained doom, but as one in which the plot to some extent depends upon us, so that we become the creators of our own tragic history. We cannot then palm off responsibility altogether for the tragic outcome upon the universe as we can with a natural disaster.

Contrast this attitude toward tragedy with the Hegelian fetishism of history which in the end is but the rationalization of cruelty. Contrast it with the traditional theological conception which offers, at the price of truth, the hope that the felicities of salvation will both explain and recompense human suffering. Contrast it with the attitude of Unamuno whose hunger for immortality is so intense that he sees in intelligence or reason the chief enemy of life, both in time and eternity. For him the joy and delight of life is the conflict of value and value no matter what the cost. "The very essence of tragedy," he tells us, "is the combat of life with reason." And since the Inquisitor is concerned with the eternal life of his victim's soul, the potential victim must defend the Inquisitor's place in society and regard him as far superior to the merchant who merely ministers to his needs. "There is much more humanity in the Inquisitor," Unamuno says. Crazed by this thirst for the infinite,

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he glorifies war as the best means of spreading love and knowledge. He illustrates the dialectic of total absurdity and caprice in thought which so often has prepared the way for atrocity in life. Here is no quest for the better, for the extension of reasonable controls in life and society, for peace in action.

No two thinkers seem so far removed from each other as Miguel de Unamuno and Bertrand Russell, and as philosophers they are indeed related as a foothill to a Himalayan peak. But this makes all the more significant the similarity of their attitude toward the arts of social control which require the extension of man's power over nature. For Russell, any philosophy and particularly one like Dewey's, which interprets ideas as implicit guides to activity and behavior, and knowledge as dependent upon experimental reconstructive activity in the situation which provokes it, exhibits "the danger of what may be called cosmic impiety." It is an arrogant power philosophy whose insolence toward the universe is hardly less objectionable when it stresses social power rather than individual power.

It is fortunate that Russell's attitude—in which he is not always consistent—toward control of our natural environment has not prevailed, otherwise the whole of modern civilization including modern medicine would never have developed. The charge of megalomania against any view of knowledge just because it is not a pure spectator view is absurd. For the pragmatic view accepts the Spinozistic dictum that nature can be changed only by nature's means. The problem is to discover or devise these means. This cannot be done intelligently without experimental activity. According to Russell's own position, power itself is neither good nor bad, but only the uses and ends of power. But since he also tells us that there is no such thing as a rational or irrational end, that intelligence or reason is helpless in determining what we should do with our power, one can argue with much better warrant that it is *his* view, *if acted upon,* that increases "the danger of vast social disaster," not the pragmatic view which believes that by changing nature and society men can to some extent change themselves in the light of rationally determined ends. No humane person can read history without being moved more by man's failures to use the knowledge he has had to remove the evils and sufferings which were remediable than by his attempt to achieve too great a control or power over nature. It was not science which was responsible for the use of the atomic bomb. It was politics—a failure of politics to understand the true situation. The pitiful disparity at any particular time between what we know and what we don't know is sufficient to inspire a sense of humility in the most intellectually ambitious. But it is only in the most vulgarized sense of the term "pragmatism," a sense which Russell helped to popularize by flagrant and persistent misunderstandings, that the adequacy of a theory of knowledge, which regards activity or experiment as integral to the achievement of knowledge of fact, can be judged by its alleged integral social consequences.

As I understand the pragmatic perspective on life, it is an attempt to make it possible for men to live in a world of inescapable tragedy, which flows from the conflict of moral ideals, without lamentation, defiance, or make-believe. According to this perspective, even in the best of human worlds there will be tragedy—tragedy perhaps without bloodshed but certainly not without tears. It focuses its analysis on problems of normative social inquiry in order to reduce the costs of tragedy. Its view of man is therefore meliористic, not optimistic. Some philosophers belittle man by asking him to look at the immensities without; others belittle him by asking him to look at the perversities and selfishness within. Pragmatism denies nothing about the world or man which one truly finds in them, but it sees in men

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something which is at once, to use the Sophoclean phrase, more wonderful and more terrible than anything else in the universe—the power to make themselves and the world around them better or worse. In this way pragmatic meliorism avoids the romantic pessimism of Russell's free man, shaking his fist in defiance of a malignant universe, and the grandiose optimism of Niebuhr's redeemed man with his delusions of a cosmic purpose which he knows is there but knows in a way in which neither he nor anyone else can possibly understand.

To the meliorist the recognition of the gamut of tragic possibilities is what feeds his desire to find some method of negotiating conflicts of value by intelligence rather than war, or brute force. But this is not as simple as it sounds. Though there is no substitute for intelligence, intelligence may not be enough. It may not be enough because of limitations of our knowledge, because of the feeble reach of our powers of control. It may not be enough because of the recalcitrance of will—not merely the recalcitrance of will to act upon goods already known and not in dispute, but because of unwillingness to find out what the maximizing good in the situation is. And although we are seeking to settle conflicts of value by the use of intelligence rather than force, is it not true that sometimes intelligence requires the use of force?

Let us take this last question first. Faced by a momentous conflict of values in which some value must give way if the situation is to be resolved, the rational approach is to find some encompassing value on the basis of some shared interest. This, as we have seen, involves willingness to negotiate—to negotiate honestly. The grim fact, however, is that there is sometimes no desire to reason, no wish to negotiate except as a holding action to accumulate strategic power, nothing but the reliance of one party or the other upon brute force even when other alternatives may exist. In such cases the moral onus rests clearly upon those who invoke force. Their victory no more establishes their claim to be right than a vandal's destruction of a scientist's instruments of inquiry has any bearing on the validity of his assertions, evidence for or against which could have been gathered by the instrument destroyed. The intelligent use of force to *prevent* or crush the use of force where a healthy democratic process, equitable laws and traditions and customs of freedom make it possible to vent differences in a rational and orderly way, is therefore justifiable even if on prudential grounds one may forgo such action. This means that tolerance always has limits—it cannot tolerate what is itself actively intolerant.

There is a tendency in modern philosophical thought which, in properly rejecting too sweeping claims for the role of intelligence in human affairs, settles for too little even when it does not embrace a wholesale skepticism. But this is a theme for more technical treatment elsewhere.

I have perhaps overstressed the sense of the tragic in human life in an effort to compensate for the distortions to which pragmatism has been subject. There is more in life than the sense of the tragic. There is laughter and joy and the sustaining discipline of work. There are other dimensions of experience besides the moral. There is art and science and religion. There are other uses for intelligence besides the resolution of human difficulties. There is intellectual play and adventure. But until men become gods—which will never be—they will live with the sense of the tragic in their hearts as they go in quest for wisdom. Pragmatism, as I interpret it, is the theory and practice of enlarging human freedom in a precarious and tragic world by the arts of intelligent social control. It may be a lost cause. I do not know of a better one. And it may not be lost if we can summon the courage and intelligence to support our faith in freedom—and enjoy the blessings of a little luck.

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COMMUNITY, VALUES, COMEDY

HAROLD ROSENBERG

Sociological studies expose their areas of inquiry as under a huge searchlight. There is an absence of shading, but this only makes the image presented by systematic research seem more complete; compared with it, the social novel or literary essay offers merely a smudge of emotionally charged individual instances. Literature reincarnates Madame Bovary or Anna Karenina—*The Kinsey Report* passes all restless wives through its turnstile. Having perused a "study," the reader is likely to conclude that while literary works have their use in exploring individual oddities or for entertainment, if one really wants to know about his human environment, about Puerto Ricans in New York, suburbanite Jews, bohemians, agricultural villagers, Madison Avenue exurbanites, in fact, about anybody (since none escapes category), he had better get a hand from the social scientist.

The literary man himself often reacts to a social study with dismayed admiration. So many excellent details—how can a writer as a single person keep up with the revelations of teams of specialists? Perhaps, sociology means the end of the novel, at least, of a certain kind of novel. Perhaps the writer ought to follow on the heels of the sociologist and attempt to make his contribution in terms of manner of presentation.

The author's chagrin, however, is short lived. Soon he observes that though the study has lighted up a few unnoticed corners there is much in it that he knew all along. And not only he—indeed, he finds, the study mainly consists of commonplaces. A novel written on this level of discovery would be dismissed as a bore. What takes people in about the scientists is the grand display they make of the machinery by which their petty findings are dredged up—explanations in technical language of how the data was collected and how much of it, how different factors were weighted, what safeguards were built against distorted interpretation, etc. Actually, instead of a portrait of society, one gets a view of the sociologist's workshop with some charts on the wall. The matter contained in these charts could be quickly summarized, but the sociologist keeps redistributing his meager information into different percentages and statistical tables. In sum, most works in sociology are neither readable nor even meant to be read. Whatever they have to communicate comes out best in journalistic digests—who, for instance, went through the whole of *The Kinsey Report* or of Stouffer's *The American Soldier?*

Arguments such as these, Professor Lewis Coser has recently contended, are used by literary men in an effort to retain for themselves "the domain of cultural criticism and social commentary which has been [their] almost exclusive preserve." It is a case of a monopoly threatened by another power—and the writers' mockery of the bad rhetoric of the sociologists, of their superficiality, of their research paraphernalia is but a weapon against the superior industriousness of the newcomers. Instead of welcoming the researchers who have come to clean up the wild growth of social impressionism, the literary men keep firing at them as invading barbarians who must be kept from landing.

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If all that the writers have found to object to in sociology is its jargon, its techniques, and its self-imposed limitations, it seems to me Professor Coser has a point. It is a case of an older calling saying to a newer one, "Your professionalism is showing." To produce platitudes with much clanking is the way of all the intellectual trades, including that of writing. Each occupation develops a lingo of its own by which its members recognize one another and protect themselves against outsiders; coming too late for the Latin of priests and physicians, or the sign language of physicists and musicians, the social scientists have been compelled to compose a terminology through spoiling ordinary words. This they have succeeded in doing within a comparatively short time, thus enabling themselves to obscure their statements at will, like old hands of the vestry or consultation room, wherever a danger spot needed to be covered up or a research project kept going in a circle. It is difficult, however, to see how contemporary literary critics can protest if others avail themselves of the advantages of thickened rhetoric. Nor has current poetry or fiction shown any large will to break out of the kind of writing that keeps literary practice at a happy distance from reality. If jargon and tricks of the trade are the issue, it should be noted in favor of the sociologists that very little worth saying has ever been said in the common language of man. Aquinas and Hegel wrote in jargon, and our period is not the first in history in which each of the arts has found its proudest creations to be fully comprehensible only to its practitioners.

Popular culture aesthetes to the contrary, criticism of sociology must go beyond taunts regarding literary style; where a genuine exposure of social fact occurs—i.e., where the study acts as criticism—its heaviness of manner should not be held against it, any more than the stuttering of Moses against his tablets. In my opinion, as noted elsewhere, sociological writings have in the past thirty years contained a more faithful reflection of facts disturbing to the American consciousness than the sum of our novels or plays—compare, for instance, Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* with fictional apologies for the South. Still, as C. Wright Mills suggests, sociology is a kind of *imagination* and must submit to investigation of its language, its assumptions, its moods.

Maurice R. Stein's *The Eclipse of Community** takes the literary bull by the horns. It proposes that community sociology shall acquire the finesse of literature and the breadth of history and philosophy. Yet it is a book by a professional sociologist, on the profession and for the profession—it departs neither from the vocabulary ("kin statuses," "compensatory rewards," "heterogeneous population aggregates") nor the methodological concerns of the community studies. Thus it raises the question whether community sociology can think and speak on the larger scale of affairs and values, or whether Stein has supplied an insider's exposé of its inherent weaknesses.

The very word "community" lands us in deep thoughts concerning the human environment of individuals and what each owes to the many. Despite its title, however, Stein's book puts off speculation to the end—we begin with actual American cities, towns, and neighborhoods, those that have been the most carefully examined. Summarizing the outstanding studies of the past forty years—such as Park's investigations of Chicago, Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto,* the Lynds' *Middletown,* Lloyd Warner's *Yankee City,* Stouffer's *The American Soldier,* Seeley, Sim, and Loosely's *Crestwood Heights,* and Vidich and Bensman's *Small Town in Mass Society*—*The Eclipse of Community* presents fascinating data on American life from the 20's to the present. To sociologists, one assumes, this information is old stuff, but laymen should be grateful for the chance to get the gist of the surveys, while avoiding the wear and tear of the studies themselves.

The Eclipse, however, is by no means a mere digest or popularization. Its feature is Stein's linkage of the studies together into a kind of history of the nation's changing ways, and his attempt to derive from them a conception of trends and values in America today. On the professional plane, by this "interpretation of American studies," Stein hopes to rescue them from the "limbo" into which they fall as cross-sections of

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transient modes of social life by treating them as evidence supporting a theory of social development.

It seems to me that in his primary aim of joining the studies to one another meaningfully Stein has succeeded. A survey of a mill town in the depression reveals the working of processes which reappear in more developed phases twenty years later in a plush suburb. The processes are those observed by Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Mannheim: urbanization, industrialization, bureaucratization. Of course, the reason Stein can find them in communities separated in time, place, and social character is that each American community and sub-community is part of the nation as a whole and is subject to what is happening in it; so that the blocking off of any section for study is an arbitrary procedure to begin with—perhaps no community should have been analyzed except as a microcosm (as was done in *Small Town in Mass Society*). In any case, Stein has been able to reconnect the studies with one another putting together what the profession set asunder.

The effect of urbanization, industrialization, and bureaucratization is to disorganize community life and to reconstitute it on a different cultural plane. Similar developments could be observed in Tuscany or Cambodia—the Chicago variation in the 20's was as follows: ". . . with the process of growth of the city the invasion of residential communities by business and industry causes a disintegration of the community as a unit of social control. This disorganization is intensified by the influx of foreign national and racial groups whose old cultural and social controls break down in the new . . . situation in the city. . . . Delinquent and criminal patterns arise and are transmitted socially just as any other cultural and social pattern is transmitted."

Stein's review of the studies of sub-communities (ghettos, gangs, rooming-house districts) shows how they have been leveled over the years and re-formed along a common pattern, thus laying the ground for present day cultural conformity. Together with the integration of immigrant cultures has come the weakening of bohemian centers of resistance, as their life styles have been absorbed into conventional society under the prodding of the novelty-seeking mass media. All this is very instructive about phenomena of daily life: e.g., the appearance of gefilte fish and matzos in countryside supermarkets represents the integration of immigrants; abstract art in synagogues spells middle-class absorption of bohemia.

To the individual the decline of sub-communities brings depersonalization and psychic decomposition. In their ghettos the foreign born of fifty years ago, though doomed to "marginality," had three-dimensional personalities; let out into the world, their grandchildren suffer from "diffusion." At the same time, identities based on the crafts and trades have been dissolved by mass production, which has also undermined the traditional "status systems." Bureaucratic management of work, consumption, education, has led to sameness in all activities and to a reliance on experts in the most private sectors of personal and family life.

In its larger aspects the community story thus becomes the familiar one of the steady dimming of folk culture and of personality and spirit under changes wrought by industrial civilization—and one is not surprised to find Stein invoking Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber, and Erich Kahler as "contemporary philosophers whose work has important bearing on the theory of communities." Through an overlapping of German crisis-philosophy and American community studies, Stein presents "alienation" in terms of daily detail.

How has this combination of sociology and culture-theory been accomplished? Perhaps the answer is that Stein's "existentialists" are looking back to the ritual society for the measure of man and that the sociologists (at least those who are not content with mere counting for the sake of market research or voting predictions) are doing the same thing. "One can hardly appoint oneself a social philosopher," writes Stein; then, after acknowledging his debt to the above-named humanists, adds disarmingly, "Following established sociological practice, my philosophical position was smuggled into Part III, loosely disguised as chapters on anthropology and psychoanalysis." The philosophy of cultural eclipse can be palmed off as a value-scheme derived from anthropology only to the extent that

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both share a nostaliga for the "organic" community and instinctual behavior specifically. Arendt *et al* have little use for primitivist or psychoanalytical concepts.

Apart from nostalgia, I can see no reason for judging modern community life by the bio-social standards of folk culturists or by socio-psychiatric standards of neo-Freudian theoreticians. Stein draws from Erik Erikson a synthesis of anthropological and psychoanalytic values: "Looking forward, the individual should be able to see a series of later phases of adulthood each with its own demands and rewards. The human life cycle is a social as well as a biological fact. Only the most gifted and courageous are able to carve out their own. Unless the groundwork for identity elaboration is laid in adolescence, the adult is condemned to permanent confusion. A community must then provide its members with, at the least, meaningful sexual and work identities if it is to ensure its own continuity as well as the psychic integrity of its members."

These, apparently, are aims no one would quarrel with. But are they? "The individual should be able to see a series of later phases. . . ." Why should he? Dostoevsky made fun of the Germans because among them every "phase" of a son's life was planned by the family from birth. But if the youth doesn't know where he's going, the adult will be "condemned to permanent confusion." When, since his departure from Eden, has man escaped confusion in regard to his identity? Heroin takers tell us that the allure of the drug is that it annihilates questions or empties them of personal anguish. Ritual has an identical effect. It is because confusion is inherent in man that he is given to narcotics and conversion rites. But the anthropological philosopher wants him back in an organic Eden where the different "phases" of life are bridged so naturally no one is upset by them. In his paradise, "identity elaboration" is taken care of through the community groundwork and without individual crises or separatist intoxications or cults. There are people, however, who would rather risk confusion with its catharsis than find themselves consigned to a foreseen "series of later phases."

With the "life cycle" no longer under social management, "only the most gifted and courageous are able to carve out their own." Why not make it a "value," then, as did Lautréamont and Nietzsche, that everyone shall become gifted and courageous? This seems more desirable than for a community to "provide its members with, at the least, meaningful sexual and work identities." Developing my talents and courage puts the question of my identity up to me, where it belongs; while if the community "provides" my identity, it will, as in past societies, tend to be little more than a dog-tag in depth and belong more to my neighbors than to me.

To judge the quality of life in it, a community needs to be seen in the perspective of other communities. But to turn to anthropology for values is to run the risk of utopianism, both of the scientific and the poetic variety. The danger is especially acute among those figures in American anthropology whose small town or European folk sentiments have mingled with a lapsed Marxism in a fantasy of total social communion. Stein is much taken by theories stemming from a vision of the "mystical participation" of primitive consciousness in which the split between mind and feeling is unknown. On this score he leans heavily on Paul Radin: "Primitive social order as conceived by Radin rests on a dramatic synthesis in which everyday life is transformed and saturated with meaning. Individuality depends on the capacity to participate imaginatively in the experiences and satisfactions of the whole community." I cannot conceive what makes the primitive synthesis *"dramatic,"* but it is certain that an individuality that depends on joining in the "experiences and satisfactions" of all is not the individuality of anyone we think of as an individual. It would seem to exclude the idea of discovery or change; on the other hand, the demand for "imaginative participation" in the affairs of the whole community sounds exactly like the notion of "the people's artist" in socialist-realist aesthetics.

RETAINING the total community of anthropology, Stein tries to give it a modern personalist inflection; his position, he concludes, "rests upon the assumption that human communities exist to provide their members with full opportunities for personal development through *social* ex-

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perimentation." Here Stein is trying to slide verbally over a contradiction of enormous magnitude. Once again the community is presented as a "provider," rather than as the focus of shifting needs and struggles. At the same time, the community is conceived as an ideal testing ground for individuals, which is to fly into the possibility-world of the laboratory and of vanguard art. Were everyone to engage in "social experimentation," the present "eclipsed" community would seem as timelessly ordered as an African village in high noon.

Personal development or "self-realization" is, of course, a grand aim; but if you judge the actual common life by how this aim is being advanced, man will be found to fail, as he does when judged by any ideal, say that of the soldier or the saint. Worse still, self-realization, if conceived as a community goal, will contribute to make man fail, as the community apparatus, seeking to articulate the individual's life toward its concept of maturation, augments his anxiety and rigidity. In aboriginal societies, Stein reminds us, "ritual dramas bind together the phases of life to assure growth," thus helping "the individual confront his own destiny." Perhaps. Yet what is the destiny of primitive man but to be the vehicle of abstract "phases"? and why speak of *confronting* where there is no disturbing consciousness of self?

The sense of civilized man's failure accounts for the despondent tone of many of the community studies, their persistent intimation of moral and intellectual grayness in the lives being observed. Explicit condemnation is ruled out by the scientific pretense of "objectivity"; nor, wearing his neutral mask, does the sociologist cite any code or comparison which justifies putting the Indian sign on his human subject. Yet his descriptions consistently build proof of a worn-out and futile existence. "The intimacy of primary relations," wails *Crestwood Heights,* "can be punctured easily: the flow of after-dinner conversations will often be broken clearly and sharply at nine by a vigilant host who has scheduled a television viewing as part of the hospitality of the evening; a chattering group of students will be divided neatly into two halves by an ongoing bus (four minutes late), half boarding the vehicle, the remainder continuing on foot; family dinner is interrupted by long-distance phone calls for father."

Together with this owlish clucking comes a conviction of fatality—things will go on getting more and more this way, and there's nothing that can be done about it. It is to Stein's credit that he calls attention to this fatalism in the community studies and that he connects it with the "objective" approach: "This picture is at least partly an artifact of the distance between the observer and the community." Exactly. For how can improvement be expected if the owlish critic keeps his own will out of the picture and concentrates on what is trapped in his research apparatus?

RECOGNIZING the concealed indignation in much of community sociology, Stein seeks ways of bringing it to the surface without violating the requirements of objectivity. In this connection, keen perception leads him to raise the question of literary style. "It is surprising that so little attention has been paid to the crucial role played by reportorial style, since it is at least as important as the more frequently noticed style for conducting the field work." Stein commends the Lynds for their straight-faced irony "through which they report what the people of Muncie are experiencing, while simultaneously critically commenting on that experience." In another place,* I have noted the resort to the dead-pan by Riesman and William H. Whyte, Jr.

The trouble with this type of irony is that the critical comments introduced by it are at once both superficial and opaque. It enumerates the routines and platitudes of the social group under observation and induces scorn of an existence limited to these mean experiences. In doing this, it intimates that the sociologist and his readers live quite differently and have in common an understanding of a higher way of life. As Stein points out, "There is an irresistible tendency for the reader of community study to assume an all-knowing attitude toward the community he is reading about." In short, the irony of sociology is that of a coterie, a system of double meanings similar to that of addicts or homosexuals—Whyte complained that this irony too often went

* *The Tradition of the New,* p. 276.

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over people's heads. The strongest motive of this non-committal style is self-protection, similar to the "neutral" face of delinquents caught with the goods (after all, studying one's neighbors is a species of spying or peeping). It is cute of Stein to approve of the sociologist's "smuggling" in his values, but the adequacy of these values is by no means guaranteed by the fact that his objectivity is a fake.

The oldest form of the social study is comedy. Granted that Marx, like other theoreticians of society, gave thought to the structures of pre-historic communities, his sense of the human situation owed more to Shakespeare, Cervantes, Rabelais, Diderot, Balzac. Anthropology searches for Man in aboriginal settlements; literature has been knocking around with men and women for three thousand years. If the comedian, from Aristophanes to Joyce, does not solve sociology's problem of "the participant observer," he does demonstrate his objectivity by capturing behavior in its most intimate aspects yet in its widest typicality. Comic irony sets whole cultures side by side in a multiple exposure (e.g., *Don Quixote, Ulysses*), causing valuation to spring out of the recital of facts alone, in contrast to the hidden editorializing of tongue-in-cheek ideologists.

It is the absence of comic perspective, characteristic of moral reformers and utopians, that turns many community reports into records of sour failure. To return to Crestwood, that suburban haven of the well-to-do and sophisticated: in their will to conform and have their children conform, in their patronage of tutors in manners and of witch doctors and alchemists, in their putting social success before enjoyment of life and human feelings, in their anxious counting of signs of age and fear of the contempt and indifference it will bring, these husbands and matrons resemble the pillars of society of all ages. For our sociologists, however, they suffer horrors that seem brand new—the account of them even sounds like *news*. "For both sexes," observes *Crestwood Heights*, "despite diets, cosmetics and facial surgery, age creeps on. [*O rage! o désespoir! o vieillesse ennemie!*] A critical period for the male, as it certainly is for the female, is the 'change of life.' Surrounded by more secrecy than is puberty, except when it is the subject of not too gentle joking, this period threatens, sobers, frightens. The crisis surrounding menopause is, however, more serious with the female, while the next general crisis, which comes at retirement is almost exclusively a problem for the male."

As we look through the telescope, Stein interprets for us: "It is important to notice what is happening here. The human life cycle has been leveled by a cultural system which ignores the values that can be found in various ages."

So it is our system, not old age, that brings this sadness—I can think of other things that are wrong with the system. But isn't it true that people were also "ignoring the values" of old age in the days of Aesop, the Old Testament, Louis XIV? Advantages "can be found" in dying, but it is for philosophers to find them. However, as the title of Paul Radin's study suggests, primitive man *is* a philosopher and solves that problem too, and without the strain of reflection.

In Crestwood, "male careers have a terrible inevitability with performance peaks usually being reached in the late thirties only to taper off in the fifties and with virtual obsolescence arriving at an ever-earlier age." If the suburban male had a sense of reality, he'd reach for the cyanide before he grew up. He is still here only because he deludes himself; and it takes a comedian with a zest for the life behind play-acting and deception to delight in these delusions. In his brief predictable span, the Crestwood paterfamilias has yielded to all kinds of foolishness: he has been puffed up at his success, admired himself for his philanthropy, been distracted by triumphs at the office and in the club car, by glances passed between himself and Mrs. X. Poor fellow, he cannot keep his inevitable defeat as steadily in mind as can the sociological master of the facts—yet isn't his shortness of memory also a fact and worthy of study? If his wife didn't pester him so about his diet, he could have been painted by Chaucer or Franz Hals (though not by Niebuhr). Is he to blame that the search for scientific generality should have thrown him instead under the poky eye of the community-study team?

As we have insinuated once or twice, community reports have comedy in them

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in any case, if from no other cause than their way of computing human activities as if they were wind velocities or traffic over a fish ladder. What is needed is to bring the comedy forward. For this, the first condition is that the professional "participant observer" shall be a participant in life before he participates in the community. This means that he shall be constantly aware that the joke is on him too—if not this joke then another one very much like it: for instance, if he has avoided the comedy of the small town with its protective disguises, he has been caught in the comedy of sociology with *its* disguises. Through his own life alone could he recognize the common situation of man as victim-critic of his actions and his environment, and thus achieve an objectivity that is not a ruse.

Like dreams, the myths of primitive peoples reflect the philosophies of their interpreters. If, as Stein wishes, sociology is to make use of dramatic concepts, it must be prepared to give itself to different values than can be deduced from aboriginal imagery. For example, in creating social types, comedy takes for granted, and turns into a source of pleasure, the "impoverished emotional life" which the primitive culturist reprehends as an effect of civilization's abnormalities. While to anthropological imagining the community appears as the happy "dispenser of roles," in drama all identities are false identities; individuals live in permanent peril of a tragic or comic exposure of their "true selves." (Similarly, all bohemias are false bohemias; discarding a social costume only uncovers another social costume; Stein's fear that *real* bohemias are disappearing simply pushes him into the comical proposition that our society may have "to plan for bohemias.")

Above all, life for the dramatic thinker consists not in a "harmonious development of potentialities" but in enduring wounds—the returning hero is recognized by his scars; while social science cultivates a horror of blemishes and itself seeks the "success and happiness mask" which it delineates in the middle class.

What the sociological imagination can gain from drama is its image of the community as a theater of conflict. No form of thought is more deterministic than comedy and tragedy, where the plot controls the behavior of the characters as their destiny. Yet in drama the force against the individuals is not a system of impersonal processes but embodiments of those processes, not industrialization, organization, bureaucratization, but tycoons, gangsters, office-holders. The very meaning of the word "drama" implies that in every human encounter an action takes place through which the actors realize themselves as individuals. The metaphysics of the integrated community, however, chooses fantasy in place of action. "Given the conditions of rural surrender," writes Stein of the inhabitants of Springdale, "perhaps the retention of a mythology that allows a minimum of collective self-esteem and justification is the only real alternative to social disintegration." Viewed this way, "the conditions of surrender" are always present. Yet the drudgery of the American community is owing not to the influence upon it of historic forces but to the failure of its members to struggle with those forces—in plain terms, to the absence of political action.

For comedy there can be no "terrible inevitability," since the exposure of the social imposture of itself works a change, through the purging of consciousness and the release of energy. With his anthropological bias, Stein cannot accept this radical effect of self-knowledge. "People need to believe in the value of the communities in which they live, the goals that they seek, and the satisfactions they receive. None of this would be possible if the true state of affairs was exposed; and it is ironic that exposure would not necessarily render the facts amenable to change." In a word, Stein sees the Springdale folk as doomed and like the Grand Inquisitor settles for their consolation through illusion. Is this, as Dostoevsky thought, the inescapable conclusion of the scientific humanitarian? Must his objectivity end in the approval of mystification? That may be so, unless his understanding of Crestwoods and Springdales rests on the belief that if their inhabitants knew themselves as they are, they could give birth to a new community (or two or three), despite the limits set by the "socio-economic basis" or "urban dominance."

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IN THE COMMUNITY

by MILTON HIMMELFARB

Nazi, Foreign

Editorial opinion on the Eichmann case was generally understanding but mildly disapproving of the way the Israelis captured him and of their intention to try him in Israel. The Washington *Post* and a number of Southern newspapers were severe about the means the Israelis used to get him. The New York *Times* and New York *Post* kept urging the Israeli government to hand him over for trial to an international tribunal (*Times*) or to Germany (*Post*), though these are the most popular newspapers among American Jews and though for both, especially the *Post,* that popularity is very important.

(Erich Fromm had an appalling, reckless letter in the *Times,* comparing the Israelis with Nazis ["Israel has failed to conquer the Nazi spirit"], with Trujillo, and with Stalin. Yet Fromm is an expert on psychic disorders, and a Jew, and from Germany.)

How most Jews felt was pretty clear. The Yiddish and English-language Jewish newspapers, reports of sermons, conversations with friends, introspection—in general these showed enthusiasm and a readiness to support Israel. Even some strong anti-Zionists felt, almost for the first time, that Israel is good for the Jews. On the other hand, Nahum Goldmann, publicly, and other leaders of Jewish organizations, privately, tried to persuade Israel either to include non-Israelis among the judges who will try Eichmann or to transfer him to an international jurisdiction. Their argument was twofold: (1) as an old maxim has it, justice must not only be done, it must manifestly be seen to be done; an Israeli court, though it would be as fair and judicious as the court of any other country, would be open to the suspicion of bias, and (2) it is necessary to avoid creating or strengthening the impression that there was a private fight between Jews and Nazis and to emphasize what we have emphasized from the beginning, that Nazism was a crime against all humanity.

It is my impression that most Jews do not really much care what court will try Eichmann, though they would prefer an Israeli court. The exemplary and cautionary power of Eichmann's fate lies in who caught him and how they caught him more than in who will try him. But it is also my impression that there is a certain impatience with the public-relations stress on humanity rather than on Jews. Eichmann's job was to kill Jews specifically, not human beings generally.

Nazi, Domestic

George Lincoln Rockwell, commander of the American Nazi party and so much an admirer of Eichmann that he sent his followers to picket the White House when Israel announced the capture, has published sheets saying things like these:

1. ". . . the ONLY cure for 'Jewitis' is old Doctor Adolf's GAS CURE!!"

2. ". . . we will spread over the U. S., until we have FOUGHT OUR WAY INTO THE WHITE HOUSE in the elections of 1972—and then, and only then can we exterminate the swarms of Jewish traitors in our gas-chambers." (The elections and the 1972 are cunning; they eliminate the "clear and present danger.")

Rockwell has asked the American Civil Liberties Union to appeal Mayor Wagner's refusal to allow him to speak in New York City. (The *Times* and the *Post* criticized Wagner for it.) Since the appeal in one form or another may still be in the courts when this issue appears, I shall not comment on the New York City matter. But a Washington case earlier this year, in which one

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of Rockwell's lieutenants figured, is no longer *sub judice*. The lieutenant was distributing Rockwell literature, a Jew attempted to snatch it away from him, he tried to retrieve it, the two scuffled, and they were arrested. Rockwell appealed to ACLU, and it sent two Jewish lawyers to defend his man. Later the charges were dropped. One thing puzzles me: what moral or professional obligation led *Jewish* lawyers to volunteer?

Everybody appeals to the law, when it suits him. The Southern newspapers call the way Israel caught Eichmann illegal, they are against the illegality of the Negro sit-ins, but they are for school segregation, though a unanimous Supreme Court has ruled against it. Americans for Democratic Action in Greenwich Village, protesting Mayor Wagner's refusal to grant a permit to Rockwell, were indignant about the unlawful behavior of Rockwell's opponents, who included survivors of Auschwitz and Belsen. They likened them to the Little Rock mobs. (Does that imply that Rockwell is like the Negro students?) The same people—certified liberals, not a few of whom are Jews—approve of the sit-ins, and most of them would probably continue to approve even if the sit-ins were to lose some of their nonviolent character.

ACLU has explained its action in the Washington matter by saying that it stands on the Supreme Court's 1949 Terminiello decision. That is disingenuous. In 1949 the legal experts carefully explained to laymen like me that the ruling in that case, which reversed a Chicago court that had fined a henchman of Gerald Smith for breach of the peace, was rather technical. What is more, the division was by a bare 5 to 4. There was a scorching dissent by the late Justice Jackson, who as a prosecutor in the Nuremberg trials had come to know what Nazism was, insisting that the constitutional protection of free speech did not extend to the kind of language Terminiello used. Rockwell's language makes Terminiello's look mild. In any event, civil libertarians have been known to prefer dissenting opinions even when the minority was smaller than four and when the majority ruling was substantive rather than technical. There is room for doubt whether the Terminiello decision applies to the Washington case.

I have heard this argument advanced: we know what Rockwell has written and said in the past, but not what he will say in the future. Wait until he says something illegal and then arrest him, but do not violate his civil liberties by preventing him from speaking. Justice Holmes said that freedom of speech does not embrace the right to cry fire in a crowded theater when there is no fire, but that does not mean that if you fear a man will cry fire you may keep him from entering a theater. Yet would not a fire marshal be justified in applying for an injunction to bar from the theaters a man with a long record of crying fire, or actually setting fires?

Another interpretation has been offered by an eminent lawyer (who also happens to be a Jew). Rockwell, says this lawyer, is not actually advocating murder—he is peacefully appealing for help to add to the Constitution of the United States an amendment authorizing or requiring the government to send Jews to the gas chambers. No one has the legal or moral right to prevent him from working for such an amendment.

Justice Jackson ended his Terminiello dissent with a warning that doctrinaire logic might convert the Bill of Rights into a suicide pact. He had learned about the Nazis; he quoted Goebbels on the use the Nazis made of civil liberties and civil libertarians while not even feigning respect for them. Rockwell is a close student of the German Nazis, and his appeal to ACLU is something he learned from his masters, just as his forecast of twelve years to power is taken from Hitler's career. What I find hard to understand is how a Jew can discuss these matters as though we were in 1920, with crematories in the unimagined future. Jackson warned civil libertarians against suicide, and the warning is all the more appropriate for Jewish civil libertarians.

Neither reason nor justice keeps us from judging future probability by past performance, or from acting on the knowledge that an appeal for murder is an appeal for murder, not for a change in the Constitution. It will not happen here, almost certainly; but the possibility of its happening is increased if the only impulse a Rockwell arouses in us is to defend his dubious rights and help him emulate Hitler and Goebbels.

For myself, I am disturbed by the unreal,

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detached—or hostile?—stance of so many Jewish liberals in the Eichmann and especially the Rockwell matters. Is it a simple failure of the imagination that is responsible? Is it repression, or distortion, or diversion of affect? Probably something more complex and obscure; and troubling.

UJA and Jewish Agency

The Luce magazines have more than once said that the United Jewish Appeal is "the No. 1 phenomenon of U. S. philanthropy." A few years ago the Department of Commerce reported that cash remittances abroad by Jewish organizations (mostly UJA) came to $95 million that year, against a Protestant total of $73 million and a Catholic total of $11 million.

The two constituent agencies and the major beneficiaries of UJA are the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the United Israel Appeal (UIA), which divide the lion's share of UJA receipts according to a formula that has for a long time now given UIA rather more than JDC. The ultimate recipient of UIA funds, in turn, has been the Jewish Agency for Israel.

It is not only through the UIA-Jewish Agency channel that American Jewish philanthropic money goes to Israel, but also through JDC itself, Hadassah, the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, and other organizations. Three things, however, distinguished the UIA-Jewish Agency system: (1) American contributors played no part in making policy, in supervision, or in actual operation; (2) consequently UIA, unlike other Jewish overseas agencies, did not belong to the State Department's Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid; and (3) while most of the Jewish Agency's income from UIA was used to settle immigrants in Israel, a small part went for purposes either not philanthropic at all or not clearly philanthropic—the so-called constructive enterprises of some Israeli political parties, cultural work, and Zionist organization and propaganda. (Under another aspect the Agency is the World Zionist Organization.) The great mass of American contributors were not bothered by the absence of an American share in policy, supervision, and execution. On the contrary, if they knew about this at all they probably regarded it as a positive advantage. They want to give, and they also want Israel to use their money as she wishes.

Nevertheless, some Jewish organizations—including the federations, through the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds—tried for a long time to effect a change. When a change did come, it was mostly because of Internal Revenue Service pressure and was just large enough to satisfy the Service (but not the federations, really). In the future, American contributors will be more actively represented in the planning and conduct of the Jewish Agency's philanthropic activities. The constructive enterprises of the political parties will no longer receive subsidies—instead they will raise funds independently in the United States, to avoid which UJA agreed to the subsidies in the first place—and UJA money will not be used for cultural work and Zionist organization and propaganda.

Some of the cultural work has been of a high order, but it is a valid argument that culture should be supported on its own, and not in the back-door fashion of the past. A contributor to a hospital may agree that music is important, but when he gives to the hospital he does not expect the philharmonic society to benefit.

In this country the American Zionist Council will assume the responsibility for certain cultural activities formerly supported, indirectly, by UJA—for example, the Theodor Herzl Institute, which has done some good things. Some people have interpreted the UIA-Jewish Agency changes as inflicting further damage on Zionism. Actually, the changes may help to arrest the progressive decline of American Zionism, though that was not the intent. For putting life into an organization there is nothing like making it raise its own funds. The American Zionist movement now has, at last, a tangible cause around which to organize the energy and devotion of Zionists.

American Jewish Congress

Those who think they know what the American Jewish Congress is would agree with what Professor Robert M. MacIver once wrote: "Congress was originally established by a group that . . . was Zionist and 'nationalist.' . . . Congress is anti-assimilationist, in the sense that it insists on the maintenance of the 'group-personality' of

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the Jewish people." That is so, but not altogether so. For some years the American Jewish Congress has been debating whether it is a Jewish organization with a civil-rights program or a civil-rights organization whose members are Jews. Its biennial meeting in May was inconclusive.

The debate came out into the open in 1958. Rabbi Joachim Prinz, who was about to be elected president, argued that if the Congress was serious about its "survival of the Jewish people" plank, it would support Jewish day schools. Justine Wise Polier—daughter of the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, a prominent member of the American Jewish Congress leadership, and wife of the director of the Congress's Commission on Law and Social Action—objected to day schools as inimical to the public-school system and leading to an undesirable Jewish self-isolation. That has been symbolic of the division ever since, and in the early months of this year it seemed that a split was in the making. The executive director, a Prinz supporter, resigned after a fight with Mr. Polier. Mrs. Polier circulated a statement that she would resign from the executive committee if Dr. Prinz were re-elected. Several declining affiliated organizations sided with Prinz.

At the convention peace was declared. Dr. Prinz was re-elected unanimously, Mrs. Polier remained in the leadership, and there was a ringing affirmation of the civil-rights *and* the Jewish programs of the American Jewish Congress. (Dr. Prinz took part in picketing a Woolworth store in New York to protest Woolworth's Southern lunch-counter segregation, but Mrs. Polier did not join the board of a day school.) A Commission on Jewish Living was created—or re-created, since one was established years ago and still publishes the quarterly *Judaism*. Financially the Commission on Law and Social Action, which is the civil-rights department, will continue to be heavily favored.

Most members of the Congress probably do not know of the conflict and would be perplexed if they knew. They are good members of the Jewish community, and they are for Jewish survival and for civil rights, for Dr. Prinz and for Mrs. Polier. But in and near the large cities I think there is also a good-sized element that would support Mrs. Polier. They have strong proud-to-be-a-Jew feelings, but the feelings are without content and in fact are more attached to civil-rights rhetoric than to Jewish religion, education, or culture—rhetoric, because in the lives they lead they are not different from the rest of the Jewish middle class.

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ETHICS & EICHMANN

Oscar Handlin, a professor of history at Harvard and a frequent contributor to Commentary, here comments on Jacob Robinson's article, which appeared last month, "Eichmann & the Question of Jurisdiction." A reply by Dr. Robinson follows.

I was distressed by Dr. Jacob Robinson's article on Eichmann, and even more so by the Editor's own comments on it.

Dr. Robinson makes his case by defining the problem in narrow legal terms. He omits discussion of the manner of Eichmann's capture, as if espionage and invasion of another state's sovereignty were irrelevant to the cleanliness of hands of those who presume to sit as judges in the case. So, too, he accepts as proof of the right of Israel to speak for "the Jewish people" the Nazi definition of the Jewish question, despite the fact that a majority of the world's Jews do not wish Israel to speak for them. And finally, he creates legal continuity for the existence of Israel as a state by the wholly unfounded implication that this was the intention of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine. These arguments do credit to Dr. Robinson's skill as a lawyer; they show little concern for the ethical problem involved.

The central issue is that of "historic justice" raised by the Editor. We can understand the emotions of a son or husband who seeks to punish the murderer who struck down an inoffensive mother or wife. But the desire to see the wrongdoer brought to retribution may lead only to an act of revenge in satisfaction of the private offense. Justice involves more than that. It calls for recognition that the offense was directed not simply against the individual who suffered but against the whole community. And it calls for adjudication by an impartial process in terms of generally accepted principles.

So too, in the Eichmann case, one can understand the emotions of survivors who wish to punish those responsible for the tragic Nazi holocaust. But justice calls also for appropriate procedures that keep principle inviolate. It was the great achievement of the Nuremberg trials to have operated in terms of such procedures and such principles.

The action against Eichmann cannot be defended in those terms. No doubt Israel will have its way in the matter; Argentina is not likely to press its protests very far and no one else cares. But that general acquiescence ought not to obscure the violence this incident does to at least two principles in which Jews still have a substantial stake.

For more than a century, men interested in freedom sought to establish the right of refuge—the principle that fugitives could be seized only by a legal process and only for crimes they had personally committed. None spoke more eloquently in defense of this right than Max Kohler and Louis Marshall. The underhand kidnapping, the violent spiriting of an individual away from a foreign jurisdiction, which until now has been characteristic only of Czarist or Communist police, certainly does violence to this right.

For more than a century in the West, also, protests against pogroms, massacres, and lesser forms of discrimination were animated by the conviction that these were offenses not against Jews or Armenians, the direct sufferers, but against humanity. The appeal was to a common conscience and a common stake in human decency. Here the grounds are shifted; and the defense of the rights of Jews become primarily a concern of

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the State of Israel—whatever the opinion of the world outside its borders. The principle is thereby abandoned and the line of defense is parochially narrowed.

And here I come to the Editor's observations on whether the Jew ought or ought not to behave "like the nations." It has always been my understanding that when Jews traditionally gave thanks that they were differentiated *min ha-goyim,* they did not thereby imagine that they as individuals were superior to or different from other men. The important distinction was that between those who adhered to a divinely inspired law and those who did not, between those who lived by the power of the sword and those who lived under subjection to universal ethical precepts. Perhaps that distinction endured through all those centuries because, lacking a state, the Jews were not in a position to yield to the temptations of the use of power. But I like to think that, in addition, this distinction reflected the binding force of transcendent moral obligations.

It is sad, from this point of view, to find Jews who are pacifists in general but justify a defensive war when it comes to Israel, who are against capital punishment in general, but seek the execution of those who have wronged their co-religionists, who profess an interest in an international moral code, but defend the right of a Jewish nation to take the law into its own hands. This tragic turn of events certainly calls for self-examination.

Dr. Robinson Replies

PROFESSOR HANDLIN deals cursorily and in such sweeping terms with so many problems that I must be excused for answering at some length.

I admit, first of all, to having dealt with the case solely in legal (why are they "narrow"?) terms. My article was explicitly designed to discuss a highly technical legal matter—the question of jurisdiction in a situation of complicated considerations—and could effectively do so only in legal terms. Professor Handlin has not, in fact, disputed my conclusions, but raises several strictures against what he seems to consider weak points in my argument.

His first objection concerns a sin of omission: I failed to discuss the "manner of Eichmann's capture." This is true and was done deliberately for two reasons. When I wrote my article, the circumstances of Eichmann's removal from Argentina to Israel had not yet been revealed, either in the note of June 3, 1960, from the government of Israel to the government of Argentina, or in Ben Gurion's personal letter of June 7 to President Frondizi. Moreover, while Eichmann's capture can be characterized as a breach of Argentine law (for which Israel has repeatedly apologized), there was not, at the time of my writing or since, a finding by the Security Council that Israel had violated Argentine sovereignty, nor was there a demand by the Council for Eichmann's return. (A study of the Security Council documents S/4334, 4336, 4341, 4342, 4345, 4346, and S/PV 865–868, may not be without interest for the historian.)

A second and more important reason why I did not discuss the capture is that it was irrelevant to the legal question of jurisdiction. There is no rule in international law, or in national laws, for that matter, which makes jurisdiction contingent upon the method with which a defendant is brought to justice. One might cite here the Supreme Court of the United States, which has often had to deal with the question of jurisdiction both in regard to "forcible abduction" of defendants from abroad, and from one of the states to another. From *Ker vs. Illinois* in 1886 to its most recent decision [*Frisibie vs. Collins,* 342 U. S. 519, 522 (1952)], the Court has consistently held that "the power of a court to try a person for a crime is not impaired by the fact that he had been brought within the Court's jurisdiction by reason of a 'forcible' abduction."

When Professor Handlin, elsewhere in his letter, reproaches me for having said that Israel has the right to speak for the "Jewish people," he has obviously misread my article, which states explicitly that "in this connection [*i.e.* being a member of the international community] Israel need not pretend to speak for Jews living in other countries."

His insinuation that I accepted "the Nazi

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definition of the Jewish question" also stems from a misreading of my article. When I referred to the Nazi definition of Jew, it was to suggest that for the Nazis *all* Jews were destined for destruction insofar as they might come within their power.

Professor Handlin brands as a "wholly unfounded implication" my remark that the intention of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine was to create in due course a Jewish state. The only evidence that could possibly be cited for his view of the Declaration is paragraph 4 of the infamous 1939 White Paper, and even the author of the White Paper declared in the British Parliament (347 Commons 1939) a few days after its publication that: "Certainly the possibility of a Jewish State was not excluded . . . it was far from excluded." Both American and British sources confirm my thesis. (See, *e.g.* David Hunter Miller's, *My Diary at the Peace Conference,* Volume II, pp. 4–5, and vol. IV, pp. 263–264, and the report of the Peel Commission, in particular its paragraphs 20–21. Further enlightenment can be found in 32 Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission 182.) It should be noted that the conclusions of the Peel Commission are based *inter alia* on the speeches and writings of the architects of the Balfour Declaration and of the Palestine Mandate: General Smuts, Lord Cecil, Lord Samuel, and Winston Churchill.

Again, the Jewish community in Palestine was, to all intents and purposes, an ally of the anti-Axis coalition from the beginning of World War II. It was actively so through its participation as a combatant, and passively so in having suffered the constraints of Nazi policy—one of whose open aims was to close forever the reservoir of potential immigrants to Palestine. The fact that formal recognition of this *de facto* situation came somewhat belatedly does not affect the position of the State of Israel as legally continuous with the Jewish community of Palestine.

Professor Handlin also charges me with a lack of concern for the "ethical problems involved." But which ones? If it is purely a matter of "cleanliness of hands," a simple weighing of the equities of the case must keep any thinking person from supporting Professor Handlin's harsh judgment. In the words of Sir W. E. Becket, "the unpunished criminal is itself a menace to the social order," and the action undertaken concerning Eichmann ought, reasonably, to be considered in this light. Louis Marshall and Max Kohler surely did not conceive of the "right of refuge" as an absolute one—the same for the murderer and his victim. When these men pleaded, after the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, for the admission of more immigrants into the United States, they certainly were not thinking of the initiator of the pogrom, Pavel Krushevan, but of his victims. Professor Handlin's suggestion that Eichmann's "right of refuge" was violated is based on a non-existent absolute right which can only be considered a travesty of ethics and a manifestation of moral neutrality. Indeed, the most recent authoritative formulation of this right—included in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—explicitly states that "the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution may not be invoked in the case of persecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes, or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations."

I am, as well, entirely unable to understand the reasoning behind Professor Handlin's innuendo that "appropriate procedures" will not be applied in the Eichmann trial in Israel. No such baseless *ante factum* charge was made by any of the serious critics of Israel jurisdiction. Surely, there is nothing in the "procedures and principles" of Israeli courts which differ from those applied in Nuremberg, which was, at the time, also decried as a "court of victors."

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Nixon and Civil Rights

To the Editor of Commentary:

In taking issue with Dwight Macdonald's quite proper observation that "no major candidate is on record against civil liberties," Mr. Robert Lee Tripp [June "Letters"] posed this question: "But has Mr. Macdonald forgotten that Mr. Nixon has one of the worst records on civil liberties of any contemporary American politician?"

The assumption behind the question just isn't true. . . . Mr. Nixon's scrupulous regard for individual rights is no new thing—despite what some of his more ardent myth-making critics may allege. Back in 1948, when the House Committee on Un-American Activities was considering Communist-control legislation, Mr. Nixon—then a Congressman—wrote to the U. S. Attorney General: "We are deeply concerned that in our efforts to combat and break up subversive movements through legislation we do not impair or destroy any of the rights and liberties which we hold so fundamental here in America. If in adopting legislation there would be any danger of suppressing a truly democratic group as well as Communist groups, I would question the adoption of any legislation at all. . . ."

Victor Lasky

New York City

Another View of Steinberg

To the Editor of Commentary:

The review of Milton Steinberg's *Anatomy of Faith* by Ben Halpern [June] is a shameful travesty. The reviewer confesses his contempt for theology, insisting that the notion that "this or any other age need look to theology for its regeneration is entirely unfounded." With such a conviction, is he qualified to judge a theological work? . . .

For an honest estimate of the volume, I refer your readers to the *Saturday Review* for June 4. The writer, Dr. Joseph D. Huntley, minister of the Broadway Congregational Church, concludes with these words: "Steinberg's book is a Te Deum to hope, courage, and rationalism in an age where these qualities are not easily found."

Is there not something basically wrong when a Christian minister finds a book by a rabbi on religious thought and on Judaism inspiring, and a Jew ridicules and lampoons it, and does so in a magazine published under Jewish auspices, and which should have an affirmative approach to Judaism?

(Rabbi) Theodore N. Lewis

Progressive Synagogue

Brooklyn, New York

[*Mr. Halpern—who is the author of* The American Jew—*called the essays collected in* Anatomy of Faith *"superb examples of religious teaching," but contested the claim (made by Arthur A. Cohen and Will Herberg) that Steinberg was an important Jewish theologian.—Ed.*]

Barbarism & Understanding

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "The Issue: May 1960," Mr. Podhoretz displays an outrageous contempt for his readers' intellect when he uses the word "barbaric" to describe the young father in Philadelphia last year "who publicly trotted out all the clichés of liberal enlightenment to plead for 'understanding' of the boy who assaulted and murdered his four-year-old daughter the day before."

It should be pointed out that the young Philadelphia father did not plead for understanding of the boy in the tired, simplified sense that Mr. Podhoretz deliberately implied. What the young Philadelphia father did do was raise a few questions: Why not study the boy as scientifically as possible now and seek to understand him so that we might prevent this form of brutality in the future? If we killed him would that prevent similar sex killings in the future? The father's emphasis was on ending this sort of murder in the future, not on saving the boy. If what

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the Philadelphia father did was barbarism, then what words can be used to describe Mr. Podhoretz's hacking? Perhaps it's just positively "dehumanized," whatever that is.

HERB BIRNBAUM

Brooklyn, New York

Predicting Delinquency

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Kenneth Keniston's critique of the prediction scale for delinquency ["Entangling Juvenile Delinquency," June] is a useful reminder of the vagueness of statistics in this field. Let me mention a further flaw in the original study by the Gluecks. In their careful matching of delinquents and non-delinquents, the delinquents were *caught* delinquents in a reformatory. This means that their intelligence was likely below that of the whole class of delinquents (and correspondingly, the matched non-delinquents would be inferior in their own group). And when the Gluecks "discover" that their delinquents are more "impulsive, aggressive, resentful, defiant, socially assertive, narcissistic," etc., they do not seem to realize that these traits are partly given by their sampling, traits that lead to being caught. Conversely, they find the non-delinquents to be more "fearful of failure and defeat, submissive, meeting of conventional expectations," and *less* "vivacious, independent, initiating." That is, what the Gluecks seem essentially to be contrasting is a group of kids who because of stupidity and/or desperation (fatalism) contrive to get themselves punished, with a group of normals who are more cowed than average and are (perhaps therefore) dull.

It is a fantastic notion that we can understand "delinquent behavior" if we restrict our sample to kids who come under surveillance of the police, courts, and social agencies. (The more definite careers of adult criminals, extending over many years, allow for more reliable statistics.) To mention just the most obvious factor, the *caught* sampling leaves out the middle- and upper-class kids who end up not in reformatories but in the better military academies.

But still more important: supposing that there *were* a good prediction scale for delinquency, then what? The idea is to follow up the high-probability cases. Does the city have a therapy handy for the family problems that on this theory are causing the delinquency? I don't think so. But if the city then intends to use some other therapeutic means, like jobs, more individual attention in school, better neighborhood and companionship, wise counsel for the bewildered, and so forth, *these* factors must *ipso facto* have some causal relevance to delinquency or they could not avail. If so, why are they not a part of our general social plan, for they are more feasible than reforming family life? (I take it that this is what Mr. Keniston is after.)

Alas! I fear that the city's use of *any* prediction scale will be not therapy but control. Allow me to quote a moving paragraph from Donald Taft's *Criminology:* "It must be confessed that it is much easier and hence more practical to deal with superficial symptomatic behavior and its immediate observable causes than to strive to cut the deeper roots of delinquency. When those deeper roots are made evident, however, we have to ask ourselves how deep we wish to go in the attack on crime. Are we willing, for example, to sacrifice many of our material satisfactions or to give up our racial prejudice?"

PAUL GOODMAN

New York City

Jewishness & Institutions

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Myron Kolatch's revealing article, "The Yeshiva and the Medical School" [May], evoked from the Editor of COMMENTARY some sanguine observations that especially interested me.

The Editor thought it possible that the development of such a school reflects American Jewry's feeling sufficiently secure "to turn its attention to general problems. . . ." He wondered, "can . . . the Einstein College . . . be called Jewish," but added that—in any case—he found it "heartening that Jews, acting as Jews, and in the name of their Jewishness (however they may wish to define Jewishness), have come more and more to devote themselves to seeking 'the welfare of the city wherein they live.' "

May I enter a demurrer?

That American Jews are increasingly concerned with general American problems may be true and would be laudable. But the de-

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velopment of institutions like Einstein School is hardly a result of Jewish "attention to general problems." What problems? The predicted shortage of physicians? The anti-Jewish admission policies of medical schools?

As for calling the school "Jewish"—Mr. Kolatch's article *did* convey that for Einstein College, as for so many other institutions, agencies, and activities, the word "Jewish" functions rather as a claim for special support from Jewry than as a symbol of the commitments of that which asks Jewry for support. Any institution, any group may call itself Jewish, define its own Jewishness, and judge the Jewishness of others. This is inevitable and as it should be.

Hopefully *not* inevitable and certainly not as it should be, is the propensity of some institutions or groups to muddle, dilute, and even adulterate their form and meaning under the seductive attraction of mere institutional aggrandizement. True, such things are done "in the name of their Jewishness (however they may wish to define Jewishness)," but this only illustrates the capacity of some people for either self-deception or cynical manipulation of uncritical "supporters." . . .

(Rabbi) Mordecai Podet

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Existence of God

To the Editor of Commentary:

I spent every spare hour for weeks trying to compose my ideas in response to Sidney Hook's article in the March issue. . . . I awaited the May issue, hoping some of your other readers would take up the argument. Three brief letters, a few lines in all, with a rebuttal by Professor Hook longer than all three: this was the sum total of response. By the June issue the entire matter had been forgotten. Does this mean that most of your readers, like most of our friends, have decided that God is dead; or rather, that he never existed? Or are they like me? Do they find it too difficult to marshal their thoughts and feelings into a coherent argument for God in the modern world? . . .

I certainly agree with Mr. Hook that ideas of God have varied greatly through the ages, and that many are unacceptable to modern men. . . . My [own] idea of God conforms to significant religious experience through the ages, yet I cannot see that it is incompatible with logic or the findings of science. . . . Just as a full and satisfying life cannot be lived without human love, neither can it be lived without personal orientation to what I will call cosmic love and purpose, to avoid use of that ambiguous word, God. . . . Direct religious experiences have varied enormously . . . but each participant has learned, first, that his existence is of supreme significance to the cosmic order; and second, that a commandment is laid upon him to value the existence of others as his is valued.

Jane K. Schwartz

Washington, D. C.

Middle-Class Judaism

To the Editor of Commentary:

My congratulations to Lucy S. Dawidowicz for "Middle-Class Judaism: A Case Study" in your June issue. This is one of the best jobs of research in religious sociology that I've read in many a day.

Louis Cassels

Washington, D. C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I assume that the pseudonyms used by Lucy S. Dawidowicz were meant to protect the innocent and the unwary—either that, or their use was meant to indicate that the whole "case study" was a fiction. If the former, we reject the offer with thanks. We are quite willing to allow your readers to visit our synagogue, or those similar to it, and judge for themselves. . . .

More than two years ago, Mrs. Dawidowicz visited our congregation. Perhaps she even made three visits to our Sabbath services, though I only recall one each on a Friday evening and a Sabbath morning. Perhaps she did quiz our members, but I wonder if the number queried would stand up as a sociological case study. It is my unhappy conclusion that, instead of a report of what in fact exists, your author . . . squeezed us into her preconceived notions of what a modern synagogue is like, and concluded that those not committed to Jewish religious life were right to begin with. After all, who wants to be a part of that religious conformism Mrs. Dawidowicz seeks to picture as "middle class identity" or of an American Judaism "converging into one

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pattern of nearly uniform observance. . . ."

True enough, if the picture of "Middle-Class Judaism" that Mrs. Dawidowicz seeks to pass off as the religion of American Jews were an accurate one, Solomon Schechter would scarcely approve. It so happens that the so-called "departures" she notes in our congregation—mixed seating, choir, organ, and the like—were all in existence in Schechter's day and he saw fit to include congregations with these practices within the United Synagogue of America. Schechter, who knew and loved the household of Israel, was quite able to distinguish between the central and the peripheral in Jewish life. From her description one wonders if Mrs. Dawidowicz is blessed with similar insight.

A woman was not called to the Torah to "titillate" anyone. This description I find interesting since of course Mrs. Dawidowicz was not present at the Institute. Her sole information concerning it came from our Bulletin and from some comments of mine. She apparently is unaware of the discussion that preceded that occasion and our subsequent consideration of the issues involved. Additionally, she calls this practice the final gasp of *kulturkampf*. Since the Shulchan Aruch is apparently her guide for "departures," I wonder if Mrs. Dawidowicz knows that Karo's guide speaks of women being called to the Torah.

My approach to Judaism is not "God-centered" as such . . . I am equally concerned with His people and His Torah and our congregation reflects the manifold concerns these interests would indicate—love of Israel and the Jewish people the world over, Torah as an ideal and a living reality.

The most disturbing of her charges, however, is that our people pray without "direction, inspiration, *kavvanah*," that our services are routine and lifeless. This is of course Mrs. Dawidowicz's personal evaluation. How can she presume to record the emotions in the hearts of our congregation? By what measures does she judge? The admonition of *Avot* seems particularly relevant: "Judge not your fellow man until you reach his level," which in this case I would interpret to mean until you pray yourself in the midst of a congregation.

This is as good a clue as any to why Mrs. Dawidowicz finds no life on Kol Nidre or Simhat Torah but much at a Torah dedication. Kol Nidre is an annual recurring day; a Torah dedication, on the other hand, is "off-beat," exotic, irregular. Her description of this occasion is highly romanticized and over-sentimentalized. . . . [A Torah dedication] requires no commitment and has no fixed time. Even an "intellectual" can respond under these conditions.

In the end, though, the refutation of individual points is insufficient. It was a wise man who suggested that you cannot refute a sneer. When that sneer is accompanied, as in this article, with a brand of popular sociology that draws grand conclusions from slight observations, you have "Middle-Class Judaism. A Case Study." Woe unto sociology of this kind and woe unto those who accept it as truth!

(Rabbi) Myron M. Fenster
Jackson Heights, N. Y.

Mrs. Dawidowicz *writes:*

What a short memory Rabbi Fenster has. The pseudonyms were in exchange for allowing me to read the congregation's historical records and interview some of its members. I must remind Rabbi Fenster that he read in manuscript what I said about him, and he also read the story of the woman who was called to the Torah. I made a number of changes at his suggestion; and the lengthy quotations of his views he wrote out in his own hand.

As for opinions about his congregation, Rabbi Fenster seems to distinguish between the written word and the oral. My opinions of the congregation in my article were more charitable than his in private conversation, as I seem to recall. But his disappointment is understandable; he perhaps wanted me to portray his congregation as he naturally would like it to be.

Eichmann

To the Editor of Commentary:

We greatly appreciated reading Dr. Robinson's succinct statement on the Eichmann case. Aside from the affair itself, he manages to make the legal terms and their implications comprehensible to us—who have been swamped with both emotional and legalistic outcries.

Ruth Gutmann
New York City

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The World of General Education*

RICHARD L. SCHOENWALD

GENERAL education grew out of a dissatisfaction with the system of free electives which, after the Civil War, displaced the tightly prescribed, largely classical curriculum long dominant in American colleges. In the late 19th century, and into the 20th, knowledge grew rapidly; as it grew, so did the courses which colleges offered. More and more the principle governing these courses became: the student's likes. Under this arrangement a freshman interested in literature took all the lit courses he could, and began as early in his college career as he could manage; disdainful or fearful of science, he fought whatever science requirement the college had.

As several contributors to this volume—described, on the jacket, as a guide for "faculties in clarifying the aims, improving the curriculum, and strengthening the teaching in general education programs"—point out, the system failed to work. Freedom edged on licensed riot, and ignorance flourished amid more knowledge than had ever been available to men. Many started college, but many did not finish, and surely one factor in drop-outs must have been—and must still be—dissatisfaction with the apparently meaningless arrangement of many curricula. The lives of those who did finish college often showed only the most minute traces of what they had learned there. Few graduated with a combination of courses very much like anyone else's combination, with the result that communication among the educated turned into silence. The world abounded in problems—war, poverty, alcoholism, divorce—and some observers noticed that people who had gone to college could not say anything to each other that seemed to help in solving them.

Out of experiments in the 20's and 30's grew the idea of a small number of courses which all students would have to take. These courses were to deal with fundamentals. Freshmen or seniors who took them would have something in common to discuss, and as adults they would share some basic knowledge about man and his world; in time, a community of educated individuals would arise. Mandatory courses of this new kind were intended to differ markedly from freshman English, or from a year-long survey of all of European history, or from introductory zoology. They were to cut across the varieties of subject matter which were ceaselessly multiplying in colleges run on the basis of the old free elective system, that the customer should be given whatever he wanted.

Proponents of the new courses, which came to be lumped together as "general education," held, for example, that every student certainly should know something about science, because science matters very greatly in the world into which he will graduate. However, they advocated establishing a course in which the literary freshman would experience together with his more scientific classmate an introduction to scientific principles, examples for which would be drawn from a variety of specialties. What mattered was not a full grounding in a particular scientific subject, but a realization of the intrinsic meaning of science.

Since the 30's, these courses have had some real success, though, as Paul L. Dressel, Director of Institutional Research at Michigan State University, observes, not much is ac-

* A review of *General Education: An Account and Appraisal*, edited by LEWIS B. MAYHEW (Harper, 212 pp., $4.00).

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tually known about why they work. Probably one important element in the wide diffusion of general education courses is the lack of precise definition for general education. This looseness has advantages: once an administration decides that an institution should have such courses, it can then tailor them in terms of its special resources and needs.

ONE learns a good deal from this book about how colleges can be organized to bring the benefits of general education to students, but one hears very little about the men and women who are to teach the courses. Such teachers have usually been trained as specialists, and usually are devoted to their specialty—to zoology, perhaps, or to invertebrate zoology—but they are not devoted to science as an abstract entity, not, at least, as a teachable entity. A few graduate schools now train teachers for general education courses, but for some time to come the staffs of such courses will be composed of teachers who have a considerable emotional, intellectual, and vocational commitment to a very particular field. Most of these people are not innately narrow: as this volume reports, it is they who have grabbed the chance to take part in faculty workshops to learn about general education, and who thus far have made general education work. Most of them are deeply concerned about their aims as teachers and about ways of realizing these aims. They are also acutely aware that in the immediate future, at least, most hiring and firing will continue to be done on the basis of an individual's specialized capacities and performance. Some colleges attempt to safeguard teachers from being penalized—in their advancement as specialists—for the time and energy they invest in general education, and such arrangements are extremely important.

But can it be easy for these teachers to be told that general education must be useful to the student, not faithful to the teacher's own field—and how do they react upon hearing, as one contributor in this volume does argue that values should be made meaningful to a student? No one should be surprised if the teacher-specialist's fears of being trampled by a rising horde of generalizers, and if his sense of outrage at the seeming violation of his own values, sometimes emerge in politicking, alluded to and analyzed in this book much less than it should be.

I wonder also how teachers carefully trained to be hard-working specialists will feel about being told, as they are here, that they must help people learn to make good use of the increasing leisure which awaits them in the golden age now opening, and how they will like being told that the lack of solutions to the problem of leisure is itself an incentive to the development and spread of general education. Perhaps the teacher's traditional seriousness belongs to times far less leisurely; perhaps his playful side, evident in his pleasure in toying with ideas, will gain prominence in response to the widely heralded needs of people for instruction in play. The earnest commitment of Benjamin Jowett to the gravity and importance of what he taught, so painfully evident in Geoffrey Faber's biography, may come to seem increasingly dated and tragicomic, perhaps stupid and wrong. But that time has not yet arrived, and meanwhile teachers must struggle with the differences between the spirit in which they were trained and the attitudes evoked by taking part in general education.

GENERAL education is a prescription which depends upon a particular diagnosis of our cultural situation. According to that diagnosis, much in our time can and should be known; people, further, must be trained to know by having some experience with basic aspects of the major areas of knowledge: the humanities (history, literature, philosophy, the arts), the natural sciences, the social sciences. The contributors to this volume accept that diagnosis, they do not question its validity, and they spend most of their time considering ways to implement it.

Nothing compels us, however, to agree with it, and we certainly need not support it simply because one prescription based upon it works with some success. If we could make another diagnosis, we might then discover an even better remedy for some of our ills.

We can start where the advocates of general education start: knowledge exploded within the last century, and the elective system failed to prepare men and women to

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deal with that growth. But given this beginning, one can then ask, as the advocates of general education do not, whether the real cause for concern should be the mere fact of the growth of knowledge, or, instead, the attitude taken toward that growth. Might not the real problem be our feeling that we must know everything—a feeling, not a reasoned awareness, that we will be bad or incomplete unless we make every effort to know everything?

For men in the West knowledge has always had emotional aspects. The Garden of Eden story suggests the terrifying and baffling qualities of knowledge, and suggests a link between knowing and eating: you have to eat in order to live, and perhaps you also have to know in order to live. But if knowing and eating are emotionally connected, then various kinds of anxiety can begin to nag: you may have had too much to eat or to know and may not be able to get it all down, keep it down, turn it into tissue, and keep it forever; or else you may not get enough.

Arrangements connected with learning often sound like those for feeding the young: the young can be encouraged to stuff themselves, as in the free elective system with its provisions for majoring in a particular subject; or the young can be forced to taste here and there, a procedure which resembles general education. Teachers themselves often feel that they are feeding; they even speak of spoon-feeding.

HERE is the situation according to this volume's contributors: everybody who goes to college—which may indeed come to mean everybody—should eat a sizable amount of everything. As Russell M. Cooper, dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of South Florida, writes: "General education . . . is designed for *all* people irrespective of prospective vocation. It draws its material from *all* the academic disciplines, wherever basic and relevant ideas can be found. It is concerned with the student's *total* development, his values and aesthetic sensitivity as well as his purely intellectual attributes, for all these affect his comprehension and mature response to the world around him." (The italics are Dean Cooper's.)

Is this fantasy of total incorporation really a sound basis for educational policy? Why must a student be caught up in it and made to act as if he were dashing from counter to counter in a candy store? Even if he likes candy, should we allow him to gorge? The Greeks faced this problem: "Life is short, the art long," runs the first Hippocratic aphorism. One might try to swallow everything, as the Sophists did, but one could also seek a more balanced solution by probing the nature of knowing, as Plato did.

Putting the problem psychoanalytically has some value. In the West, by and large, it has been good to know and to find things out. A Western superego demands that its possessor investigate and learn (even though some questions and answers may be forbidden). Man also appears to want all knowledge instinctively, just as he wants all food, all power, all sexual objects; or he may refuse to make any effort to know anything, carelessly content to do nothing that takes any effort. How can the ego deal with these threatening demands of superego and id? Perhaps it cannot alter them, but it might learn to take them less seriously if it could command a range of responses wider than a slavish running after all knowledge, a pursuit doomed to be carried on endlessly, exhaustingly, unsuccessfully.

At this point diagnosis must give way to prescription. Several contributors to *General Education* consider changed behavior or changed individuals their most important goal. Unquestionably they are right. But courses and colleges might do more changing by seeking, in a way, to do less. Certainly it is necessary to learn how to learn about the major regions of man's endeavor, but the habit of mind, the attitude toward experience, matter as much as the specific number of areas nibbled. Formal education should try to help people change from being passive objects who are enslaved by their ignorance, their desires, and the fashions of their time. Change to what? Perhaps into individuals more ready for experience, more ready to learn than when they began college. American students have been saying, hesitantly and softly: we want to learn new ways of thinking and feeling, we want to take sustenance from college and grow. General education has succeeded because it answered some of these pleas; many students still call out, and wait to be heard.

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Documents of Nazism

DAS DRITTE REICH UND SEINE DENKER, 560 pp. DAS DRITTE REICH UND SEINE DIENER, 540 pp. DAS DRITTE REICH UND DIE JUDEN, 457 pp. By LÉON POLIAKOV and JOSEF WULF. Arani Verlag (West Berlin).

Reviewed by GEORGE L. MOSSE

THESE weighty volumes of documents show us how little we have, as yet, penetrated to the core of National Socialism. Historians have concentrated on the political and sociological side of the movement to the virtual exclusion of its ideology. Yet one cannot read through these volumes without being impressed by the all-pervasiveness of the ideological appeal—exemplified by reports from the Foreign Office as well as by documents concerning the army—and without seeing that the Jewish question was, unmistakably, central to this ideology. Indeed, the authors apologize for the fact that even in those volumes not specifically concerned with the Jews, so many documents seem to deal with their fate. But there is no need for such an apology, the less so since the majority of the documents deal with the war years. What had always been central to National Socialist thought then became an obsession, not only in the mind of Hitler but within the whole apparatus of party and state. Racialism, discussed in these volumes with an almost monotonous sameness, is the clue without which National Socialism remains forever inexplicable.

This argument calls into question the historians' concentration upon German nationalism as the prime source of the movement. Perhaps they choose to deal with the familiar rather than tackle the morass of racial mysticism. One important document included here, however, shows the relationship between nationalism and racial doctrines. The head of the party office of racial politics (*Rassenpolitisches Amt*) ordered that the phrase "German race" be expunged from the vocabulary, for it implied an environmentalism which stripped the concept of its true meaning; the terms "Nordic" or "Dinaric" were to be substituted in order to universalize the superiority of the race. This argument is reminiscent of Hitler's own words: "We must attract all the Nordic blood of the world to us, and deprive our adversaries of it."

ANOTHER little explored facet of the Nazi movement also dominates these pages. The authors state that they found it necessary to include materials on men who, in their hearts, may have been members of the opposition. The involvement of so many people on so many different levels of action and thought is indeed puzzling, but an intellectual, Professor Helmut Breve, provides one answer: the National Socialist revolution once again gave meaning to life and made it worthwhile. A kind of elation runs through most of the intellectuals' work presented in the first volume. The intellectuals craved a meaningful existence expressed in ideological terms as much as did any other class of the population. (Thus Karl Mannheim's thesis—that the intellectual can be particularly objective because of his place in the social structure—is called into question.)

Though the authors stress the factor of conformism, many intellectuals seem to have been genuinely committed to National Socialism; not just historians and philosophers (though one wishes that more extracts from prominent professional historians had been included) but scientists as well—Nobel laureates like Philip Lenard and Johannes Stark with their "German physics." (Concerning Aryan science, however, even some party members were dubious. By 1944 one memorandum asked Alfred Rosenberg to encourage German physicists to return to the theory of relativity, for they had fallen behind the rest of the world.)

The moral failure of the intellectuals can only be explained by explaining the attraction of the ideology itself. These volumes make possible the beginning of such an analysis, but they lack the documents which show why intelligent men, searching for life's meaning, could so easily accept the mysticism of race. There should be one more book of documents, starting perhaps in the 19th century—one learned professor cited Adolf Hitler as the embodiment of Hegel's world historical spirit—but, with more justice, at the turn of the century; it should include not only Nietzsche and Wagner, but expressions of that neo-romanti-

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cism which in Germany typified the revolt against positivism and science that, in the end, engulfed even the scientists themselves. The urge to escape from industrial civilization, to seek in nature a rootedness outside of material circumstances, is as important for an understanding of Germany as is the much-discussed German urge toward expansion. As a Hitler youth says in one of these documents: "the National Socialist world view is based upon the Nordic race which found its best support in a virile German peasantry."

Such a view, quite clearly not new by the time Hitler took it up, resulted in the struggle against the Jews. How many of the men in these volumes had been members of the youth movement permeated by this ideology? How many had gone to country boarding schools in which a similar spirit ruled long before Hitler? The authors conscientiously cite the writings and professions of the men whose works are represented, and answering these additional questions is one way the collections should be exploited. The Jewish stereotype certainly existed before the growth of racial thought. The authors call Professor Rudolf Flick a truly wise and dignified man because, in 1935, he publicly questioned the scientific basis of the concept of race. At the end of his lecture, however, he equated Jews with a standard stereotype of selfishness, greed, and an unscrupulous quest for fame. In order to understand the wide acceptance of National Socialist ideology, we must realize that anti-Semitism was quite possible without racism and that its pervasiveness did in fact make the acceptance of racism all the easier.

Is it over? These volumes not only entomb the past, but raise serious questions about the present. Mathilde Ludendorff is included, for example, with her mystical Aryan and anti-Jewish thought, but when the German magazine *Der Spiegel* recently published an exposé of her ideas, the readers' columns were subsequently filled with letters deploring the article. Two intellectuals who knelt in mystical adoration before the "Fuehrer" and figure in these books are now editors of German newspapers; many more are active in teaching or professional organizations. We can also read an extract from Chancellor Adenauer's alter ego—Hans Globke and his commentary on the Nuremberg racial laws (the Jews are strangers in Germany through their blood and feeling)—and another intellectual, Giselher Wirsing, has passed on to the editorship of *Christ and the World*. What does it all mean? The possibility of a genuine conversion cannot be excluded: conscience can assert itself, however late. The failure of an ideology is also a powerful factor for discarding it.

But one can discard some without discarding all. Secretary of State Weizsaecker, whose guilt fills these pages, wrote his memoirs after the war and at that time gave as one reason for his collaboration with the regime the fact that the Jews were too powerful in Germany before 1933. This argument indicates once more that anti-Jewish ideas existed apart from racialism, and that the repudiation of one does not automatically mean the repudiation of the other. Recent German anti-Semitism must be viewed in this light.

Weizsaecker also used another old argument to justify himself: a sailor must not desert the ship during a storm; several documents, included by way of contrast, make such an argument untenable. Bernhard Lösener wrote a commentary on the Nuremberg laws of 1935 even more racist than Globke's; yet, faced with the Jewish massacres, officially resigned from the party and lived to tell the tale. Professor Max Bodenstein gave a speech in honor of the Jewish scientist Fritz Haber the same year Flick spoke—but without using the same Jewish stereotypes. It could be done, and it was done by honest and courageous men. Those who remained loyal to the ideology throughout the Jewish tragedy (fully documented in the third volume) share the guilt for it whether or not they finally converted and no matter how high a position they may now have in either West or East Germany. For them these volumes will resurrect a past they prefer to forget; for us they raise the problem of whether those who helped build National Socialist thought and watched its progress without protesting should today be accepted in silence for the sake of political expediency.

The authors have not only provided scholars with a gold mine of information

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but have given everyone a new view of the power over men of a demoniacal ideology. They quote from the manifesto of the most courageous resistance group, the students of Munich: "Why is the German people so apathetic in the face of the most inhuman crimes? Nobody gives them a thought. These facts are duly registered and filed." Thanks to these volumes they are no longer filed but made public.

Dogmatism and Opinionation

THE OPEN AND CLOSED MIND. By MILTON ROKEACH. Basic Books, 447 pp., $7.50.

Reviewed by LEWIS A. COSER

THIS thought-provoking book follows the tradition of such modern classics as Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* and *The Authoritarian Personality* by T. W. Adorno, *et al.* Investigating the psychology of people who hold dogmatic systems of belief, Rokeach seeks to develop criteria by which a "closed" mind can be validly distinguished from an "open" mind. One need hardly stress the relevance of such research for understanding the various forms of prejudice, the psychology of the True Believer, and the history of cultural innovation.

A major point of departure for Rokeach's studies were the investigations by Adorno and his associates which culminated in the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950. This research, which began in 1943 when, for obvious reasons, anti-Semitism had assumed a peculiar saliency for social scientists, gradually was broadened to include other forms of intolerance as well. As the research progressed, the study's well-known F scale, originally designed to measure personality traits underlying a fascist outlook, was used to test authoritarianism in general, and so those who scored high on this scale were hence dubbed "authoritarian." The results showed that such people tended to be ethnocentric, intolerant of Negroes and Jews, and politically conservative. But the shift from measuring "fascism in personality" to measuring the "authoritarian personality" led to some awkward difficulties. As a number of critics pointed out, the scale did not in fact reveal authoritarianism per se, but only right-wing authoritarianism. More particularly, the test items were so worded that members of the Communist party did not emerge as authoritarian if they were measured by the F scale.

Rokeach argues that the change from studying right-wing authoritarianism in the 40's to left-wing authoritarianism in the 50's can be explained in terms of the fascist and Communist threats during the respective periods. He maintains that the time has now come to broaden the approach and to ask whether it is not possible to distinguish between "open" and "closed" minds irrespective of particular ideologies. Rokeach urges that we differentiate sharply between the structure of ideological systems and their content: an individual, for example, may accept all the traditional pieties of liberal belief and yet hold them in a dogmatic way; or, again, some belief systems, undogmatic in content but authoritarian in structure, may advocate tolerance in an intolerant way. Rokeach further argues that while we know a great deal about ethnic intolerances, we know comparatively little about intolerance among Freudians, Unitarians, liberals, literary critics, or professors of psychology. His "Dogmatism" and "Opinionation" scales —which have no reference to a thought's content and allegedly are sensitive enough to uncover dogmatic thought both within the realm of politics and outside of it—are designed to close these gaps in our knowledge. The tests in which these scales were applied reveal no clear-cut relation between the content of political ideology and dogmatism and opinionation (despite a slight tendency for more people right of center than left to be "closed"): a group of English Communists who scored low on *The Authoritarian Personality's* F scale, scored high on the Dogmatism scale, and rightist American Catholics as well as American leftists, who on the F scale scored at opposite poles, both scored high on Dogmatism and Opinionation.

In a variety of laboratory tests, primarily with students, subjects were faced with a series of tasks whose solution depended on the adaptation of beliefs at odds with ones they held previously. The tests showed that the relatively "open" person differs significantly from the relatively "closed" person in both cognitive abilities (such as problem-solving, remembering, and perceiving) and

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emotional experiences. They also differ in their ability to enjoy unconventional "twelve-tone-music." In short, the "open" person is more willing to entertain new ideas, to synthesize new beliefs, to reconcile the new with the old.

THIS is not the place to discuss in detail a number of technical difficulties that these studies raise. A few examples must suffice: (1) traits that occur in clusters among college students are not necessarily associated with each other among other parts of the population; (2) since the sample consists almost exclusively of students about whose social origins we are not informed, one is unable to judge whether or not the correlations are spurious, i.e., whether another factor, such as middle-class values, can account for both "openness of mind" and special cognitive abilities or the taste for twelve-tone music. That is, the author tends to assume that openness of mind has a direct effect on certain cognitive abilities. But one can also hypothesize that the organization of belief systems and cognitive abilities are both rooted in social circumstances and experiences. Consider, for example, the following statement, agreement with which is scored by Rokeach as "closed": "In the long run the best way to live is to pick friends and associates whose tastes and beliefs are the same as one's own." Does agreement with this statement reveal a "closed mind," psychologically speaking, or does it instead express opposition to the middle-class stereotype of the desirability of "mixing"?

But rather than dwell further on such fairly technical questions or to report in more detail on other experiments, let me discuss another of Rokeach's general theories and then raise a more fundamental issue. The author avers that prejudice is not based on rejection of ethnic or racial characteristics, but on imagined differences between the in- and out-group concerning values and beliefs. Anti-Negro prejudice, for example, can be reduced to a set of beliefs about Negro values and life-styles; then if it turns out that Negro beliefs agree rather than disagree with white beliefs, the prejudice will tend to disappear. What is central is the congruity or incongruity of beliefs, not ethnic or racial bias.

Even if this is a correct interpretation of the psychological basis for prejudice, it still does not account, as Rokeach himself notes, for ethnic discrimination which is institutionalized or sanctioned by law. Moreover, and more importantly, it fails to take into account the fact that, to quote Robert K. Merton, "the systematic condemnation of the out-grouper continues largely irrespective of what he does." The in-group, in fact, readily transmutes virtue into vice and vice into virtue; the ethnic out-groups are damned if they adopt in-group values and damned if they don't.

THERE remains the basic issue raised by the book: the author's conception of the "open mind." As the reader peruses the items which make up the Dogmatism and Opinionation scales he notes that what they measure can hardly be the relative *openness* of a mind but rather its relative *emptiness*. Rokeach's open mind turns out upon inspection to have all the properties of a sieve. For example, Rokeach scores agreement with the following statements as "closed," disagreement as "open": "The main thing in life is for a person to want to do something important"; "If I had to choose between happiness and greatness, I'd choose greatness"; "A man who does not believe in some great cause has not really lived." One is also "closed" if he agrees with the following statements: "It is only when a person devotes himself to an ideal or cause that life becomes meaningful"; "In times like these, a person must be pretty selfish if he considers primarily his own happiness." It is clear that Rokeach equates closure with strong commitment, and he fails entirely to consider the fact that a committed man by no means need have a closed mind. One cannot help think that most of the intellectual giants of the past would be considered "closed minds" if measured by Rokeach's criteria.

When Rokeach discusses the peculiar orientations of the authors of the *Authoritarian Personality,* as well as of their critics, he suggests that all their work should be understood in terms of the *Zeitgeist* of the period during which it was done. We might now apply this approach to his own orientation, and conclude that Rokeach, beholden as he is to the ideological pieties of an age which proclaims the end of ideology, con-

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fuses openness with vacuity. Rokeach's open-minded man resembles nothing so much as David Riesman's "other directed man" who, as Riesman writes, "receives signals from far and near. The sources are many, the changes rapid. What can be internalized then, is not a code of behavior but the elaborate equipment needed to attend to such messages."

In so far then as careers in mass society are now available to open-minded people unhampered by the weight of commitment, Rokeach's scales can be highly recommended to personnel chiefs and other organization men; they can use them to help screen out those disturbers of the intellectual peace who believe that "it is only when a person devotes himself to an ideal or cause that life becomes meaningful."

A New Fictional Hero

THE NOBLE SAVAGE. Edited by SAUL BELLOW, KEITH BOTSFORD, and JACK LUDWIG. Meridian Books. 255 pp. $1.50.

LOVE AND LIKE. By HERBERT GOLD. The Dial Press. 307 pp. $3.95.

GOLK. By RICHARD STERN. Criterion Books. 221 pp. $3.95.

Reviewed by ELMER BORKLUND

AFTER paying his dollar and a half, the reader who prides himself on keeping up with the most promising new fiction (the person who bought the revived *Dial* and waited impatiently to see what *New World Writing* would be like under its new imprimatur) may wonder just what the rather ambiguous title of this new literary magazine means. Who is the Noble Savage: perhaps the image of some hero who emerges from the collective efforts of Bellow and his associates? Or possibly the archetypal Noble Savage Rousseau had in mind when he observed, "I do not want to make him a savage and send him back to the woods, but that living in the whirl of social life it is enough that he should not let himself be carried away by the passions and prejudices of men; let him see with his eyes and feel with his heart. . . ." It may be unfair to look for signs of a new "movement," but diverse as the contents of this first issue are, one senses a unifying preoccupation not unlike Rousseau's: how does one get along in this particular, mid-century social whirl; how much is it safe to see or feel?

Unfortunately the platform articles are the weakest. Harold Rosenberg writes with unparalleled obscurity about the threat of the middlebrows and their literary representatives, who mistake the laws of social climbing for the "metaphysics of identity." The exclusion of such writers as Capote or Auchincloss from the *Noble Savage* or those younger writers influenced by them (or for that matter influenced by Fitzgerald or Faulkner, whom Rosenberg miraculously links together) suggests that the Noble Savage is offered as an alternative to the Palefaces of American fiction. Herbert Gold, on the other hand, attacks the Beats, a literary creation of the Luce-papers, responsible, he maintains, for driving out the real thing—the Hipster. One can be sure, then, the Noble Savage is no Holy Barbarian or reconstituted wild man from California, but in attacking the public relations image Gold is betrayed by his glibness and indulges in a series of cheap puns and jibes which might well embarrass *Time*. Until further notice, therefore, I think it is fair to expect a new, middle-of-the-road hero, a hero one might compare, that is, with Bellow's own Augie March or Eugene Henderson, with Herbert Gold's man of feeling, or possibly even with the central figure of Richard Stern's first novel, *Golk*.

THE best pieces in *The Noble Savage* are those which successfully resist easy classification. The issue would be worth getting solely for Josephine Herbst's reflections on the Spanish Civil War, for Miss Herbst responds to the Hotel Florida in Madrid and the front lines at Jarama as Isherwood did to Berlin and Henry James did to the American scene: "through the skin." Her account of the hotel, the glimpses—often sharp and revealing—of Hemingway and Dos Passos, the little world of the noncombatants which seems to a British correspondent so like Bloomsbury, are handled in a nerveless, almost listless fashion that contrasts vividly with her powerful account of the front, the bombings, and, always, the people themselves. "About the most important questions," Miss Herbst concludes, "I felt sickeningly at sea. As for being *valiente*, who

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wasn't? If I wrote it down in my journal, it was to put heart in myself, if only to say, come now, be *muy intelligente,* be *valiente.*"

Ralph Ellison's parable of the white changeling once the charge of a Negro preacher but now a rabid Senatorial opponent of civil rights, is a good idea gone wrong. The exposition is so ineptly arranged and the flashbacks so rhetorically forced that the effect is ruined, especially for the reader who remembers *The Invisible Man.* Nor is Wright Morris at his best. Surely the selection included here, "The Scene," a long and static description of the waste land of Lone Tree and a grotesque named Tom Scanlon, is part of a longer work in progress. And if so, we have the depressing prospect of Beckett in the Midwest, reducing character to spleen and action to tired shades of disgust. Mark Harris's odd story of play therapy between a bewildered cop and a butcher (a kind of neighborhood Harcourt-Reilly) is disquieting and effective enough in its own way, but reflects the annoying split one notices in Harris's recent work. For the paperback trade Harris turns out the Henry Wiggen baseball novels and *Wake Up Stupid!,* and at his best is a genuinely funny writer; but for the quarterlies, in stories like "The Iron Fist of Oligarchy" (in a recent *Virginia Quarterly Review*) and the present piece, "The Self-Made Brain Surgeon," the humor becomes troubled and obscurely portentous. Harris seems preoccupied with the fringes of sanity and judgment, concerns which in *Something About a Soldier*—ostensibly a funny, popular book—caused a lack of focus and a serious confusion of tone.

The other stories are too slight or embarrassingly bad (Arthur Miller's contribution unhappily manages to be both) to warrant criticism. A typically gnarled and uncongenial poem by John Berryman and a first-rate bit of popular culture analysis by Harvey Swados complete the issue. Somehow Samuel Butler is admitted (in the role of "Ancestor"), and his "Ramblings in Cheapside," along with Miss Herbst's piece, makes the *Noble Savage* worth noting, if not exactly a notable event. On the whole Bellow and his initial patrol fail to bring their man back alive.

"The man who masters his isolation—comes through joyfully and sternly—will be the greatest hero of our time": so Herbert Gold maintains in his notes on *Love and Like.* Such a man, however, is conspicuously absent from this collection of fourteen stories and the over-all effect is so joyless that one wonders if the author still believes in him, even as a remote possibility. Gold writes too much too quickly and his stories suffer (though somewhat less than his novels) as a result; but the real difficulty, the serious flaw in his fiction, seems to me to lie elsewhere. The earlier stories, written from that "spasmodic impulse which grips the short story writer—find the truth by finding the truth of childhood," are extraordinarily effective. "The Heart of the Artichoke" deservedly has become a young classic, and two other stories from this period, "The Boy and the Burglars" and "Aristotle and the Hired Thugs," are almost as good. These stories bear up wonderfully well, not because of any particular formal skill on Gold's part—he seems to be indifferent to that Paleface characteristic—but because of the humor and pungency of his language and the unsentimental yet affectionate criticism he makes of his world. Together the stories form a kind of portrait of the artist as a very young man, doing for Cleveland and Detroit Avenue what the rush of language does for the childhood memories of Wales in Dylan Thomas's best short stories.

But the truth of childhood, whatever it was (perhaps simply that people must be looked at in this way), fails to sustain Gold's adults. These later stories are almost obsessive in their concern, the painful probing, largely without joy or satisfaction, of "the unheroic isolation of the bachelor," Gold's rather arbitrary emblem of "various esthetes, hedonists, Platonists—lonely and ambitious and failed and reduced to brutal egotism." The stories trace with single-minded intensity failed husbands and lonely bachelors in their various guises and through the courses of their unhappy marriages and seamy affairs; they isolate, in short, the kind of person La Rochefoucauld damned for all time when he observed that there are people who would know nothing whatever about love if they hadn't come across it in some book.

The title story is evidently one of Gold's own favorites (he chose it for inclusion in

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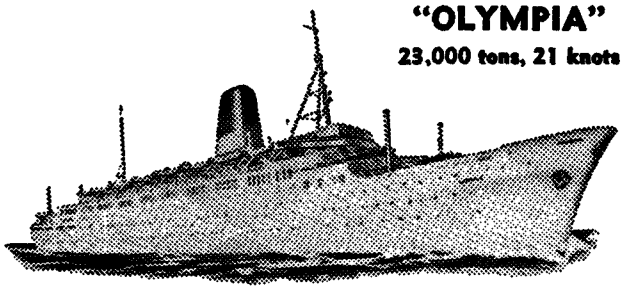

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the excellent anthology *Fiction of the Fifties*), yet this story in particular seems to me to illustrate all of his weaknesses. The narrative is held together only by Shaper's protracted inability to decide how he feels about his estranged wife. The situation simply cannot support the importance Gold attaches to it; boredom threatens at every turn, self-pity eats away at whatever structure the idea once may have had. And as if sensing that action as a principle of exploration has failed, the prose itself tries to take over the responsibilities of analysis; sententious and at the same time diffident, it alternates between pseudo-Jamesian interior analysis and an unconvincing Hemingway pose ("We didn't make it, kid," seems to be all Shaper can articulate).

At other times, however, the sense itself simply collapses, along with the syntax ("If they had finally made out, it would all have been remembered as the progress and process of love; with failure it could seem all bad; he was determined to hold in retrospect a mixed verdict—some pretty, some unpretty, and nevertheless the long Sunday afternoon habit of lovemaking spoke for a true intimacy"). The prospect before Gold's heroes is still a bleak one, but what matters is that he allows his disenchantment to override his sense of form and gives in too easily to the pressure of his subject matter.

LIKE Gold's early stories, Richard Stern's tough and comic object lesson about the nature of privacy in an age of mass media, *Golk* (an unlovely Elizabethan word meaning "a fool disguised"), fairly kicks with vitality. I think it was the late John Lardner who once demolished—at least in print—the Candid Mike, an insidious and mean-minded radio and TV show which, as Stern implies, is straight out of *1984*. Stern takes up where Lardner left off and uses this central device of an insulting voyeur to explore the weakness and vanity of his three main characters: Hondorp, the guileless but soon corrupted assistant; Hendricks, a kind of Holly Golightly without the charm of Capote's heroine; and Golk himself, the inventor of the gimmick. "There are two pivots to the golks we're doing these days," he blandly tells his colleagues. "The hook in the worm is one. You dangle a prize before

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a victim . . . and while he watches, turn the prize to dust. The other kind is . . . stepping in between a man and his legitimate pleasures." From simple golks, "centered about such situations as people opening letters informing them that they have been fired, children at the beach seeing their pails and shovels in the grip of sea monsters, women noticing suicidal types balanced on their living-room ledges," Golk goes on to more grandiose—and ultimately ruinous—ventures, the exposure of presidential aides and racketeers, not from any desire to hold the mirror up to vice and folly, but simply to invade and embarrass: "We're getting out of the cages and going into the jungle. That's where we live."

The descriptions of Golk's campaigns are so sharp and so funny that the novel is almost over before the reader begins to wonder whether or not something vital is missing—dignity, call it what you will, the sense that after all something *has* been violated. True enough, Golk, Hondorp, and Hendricks are destroyed by their monster, but one has never known enough about them to care or to take much satisfaction in their defeat; and the reader may be left with the uncomfortable feeling that in some obscure way he too has been golked. Much of Stern's humor is fresh and original (although so topical at times that one wonders if the book will be intelligible a few years hence), but it is directed too indiscriminately against Golk and golked alike. The degree of one's sympathy, and in the long run one's interest, is inversely proportional to a writer's dependence on caricature and the grotesque. And inevitably *Golk* fails to establish its point.

These failed and disillusioned figures, then, serve as the curious heroes of this new fiction. One wishes Stern and Gold and Bellow and his associates, all gifted and serious writers, believed in them a bit more, though surely they cannot invent what society fails to provide or at least suggest—art is independent but not separate. Yet it would be foolish to deny that these authors often see a good deal more than did earlier generations of American writers. And so perhaps it is true that these new heroes, however dismal their failings, do represent a true sign of how one gets along in our particular American whirl.

The Angry Young Philosopher

WORDS AND THINGS. By ERNEST GELLNER. Beacon Press. 270 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by MARSHALL COHEN

ERNEST GELLNER knew full well that sooner or later the role of Angry Young Philosopher would have to be cast. But he could only have dreamed that *Words and Things* would become the most discussed work of English philosophy since A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth, and Logic.* Professor Gilbert Ryle made the dream come true by refusing the book a review in *Mind* on the ground that it was abusive of certain identifiable teachers of philosophy at Oxford. There can be no doubt that Gellner's attack on linguistic philosophy is offensively ill-mannered and brazenly unfair, but much the same could be said of St. Augustine on the Pelagians, Pascal (not to mention Ryle) on Descartes, Nietzsche on Kant, Croce on Mill, or Sartre on Camus. To be sure, few of these aggressors (save Ryle) are discussed in the pages of *Mind,* which, incidentally, Wittgenstein found of less interest than Street and Smith detective stories. But I had always referred this omission to the regrettable insularity of English philosophy and not, as Ryle's stand now makes equally plausible, to the intransigence of English manners. Whether this stand was wise or just may be debated. There can be no doubt that it was courageous. The fact that Gellner, alluding, I take it, to Ryle's surprise conclusions, had characterized him as the O. Henry of English philosophy, made it inevitable that he should be suspected of partiality in refusing a review; and the fact that the book came with a preface from Bertrand Russell, endorsing its contentions, guaranteed that Ryle's decision would promptly be submitted to public scrutiny. Russell brought the matter to light in the London *Times,* and provoked the lengthiest controversy in its columns since the Suez crisis. It is a pity, therefore, that Gellner, who was trained in philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, and teaches philosophy and sociology at the London School of Economics, has not written a better book. There is enough truth in what he might have said for him to have made the effort to say it. As it is, the book

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will be treated by Oxford philosophers as vulgarly sensational and unworthy of refutation, and their response will seem only to confirm Gellner's charges of snobbery and evasion. The bystander, as usual, will see a measure of truth everywhere.

THE linguistic philosopher, so the story goes, fancies the history of philosophy from Plato to the positivists a continuous affront to common sense in the form of paradoxical denials of obvious truths. The traditional philosopher, on the contrary, imagines himself uttering profound and unrecognized truths when he avers that one cannot knowingly do evil, or that one can never be certain in matters of empirical fact. The linguistic philosopher diagnoses these paradoxical denials of what is commonly thought and said as linguistic confusion: the traditional philosopher who supposes himself to have told us something that we have not known about knowledge or certainty has only changed the meaning of "know" or "certain." Gellner, who takes conceptual innovation in science, philosophy, and politics to be a main task of thought, is appalled by what he believes to be the conceptual conservatism of the linguistic philosopher. His main attack is therefore directed against those arguments which he regards as the main supports of the linguistic status quo, in particular against the notorious "paradigm case argument." Gellner supposes that to undermine this argument is to shake the intellectual, if not the social, foundations of the linguistic school. Russell, who claims in his introduction to concur in most of Gellner's views, defines the argument as "reasoning from the actual use of words to answers to philosophical problems, or from a conflict in actual uses to the falsehood of a philosophical theory." "Mr. Gellner," he continues, "quotes as an example of this argument what some, at least, of the linguistic philosophers regard as a solution of the free-will problem. When a man marries without compulsion, we may say, 'he did it of his own free will.' There is therefore a linguistically correct use of the words 'free will,' and therefore there is free will." "No one can deny," continues Russell, "that this is an easy way to solve age-old problems." And it is doubtless this travesty which leads Gellner to put in epigraph to his book a statement of Russell's claiming that "the later Wittgenstein . . . seems to have grown tired of serious thinking and to have invented a doctrine which would make such activity unnecessary. I do not for one moment believe that the doctrine which has these lazy consequences is true. . . ."

FEW in possession of the evidence will take seriously Russell's accusations of indolence against the possessed Wittgenstein, and few, I hope, will suppose that the "argument" presented by Russell can be the essence of an intellectual movement which has attracted so many lucid and brilliant minds. The issues involved are of the greatest subtlety and it will be quite impossible to say anything substantial about them here. It is worth indicating, however, that if indolence is uncharacteristic of Wittgenstein, it is highly characteristic of Gellner who devotes only seven unbuttoned pages in an extremely repetitious book to the argument he thinks so crucial. In them he relies almost entirely on the criticisms made by J. N. W. Watkins of some relatively crude remarks of Professor A. G. N. Flew, who is best known (and best considered) as an anthologist and not an articulator of linguistic philosophy. It is highly questionable whether there is, as Flew suggests, *a* paradigm case argument, and even more so whether the phrase "free will" is a paradigm, or even a plausible, case on which to direct the argument. But even Flew's remarks are not treated quite fairly, and the only major figure mentioned in connection with the argument is the late Professor J. L. Austin whose remarkable paper, "Other Minds," is dismissed in one sentence in the middle of a footnote. Can Gellner really ask us to believe that this masterly thinker was guilty of supposing, what we are asked to believe all linguistic philosophers guilty of supposing, that if a word is correctly used it must apply to something? Or that he was not aware that one might use the word "miracle" correctly even if there are in fact no miracles to which it might apply? Professor Austin was as vibrantly aware of the received distinction between connotation and denotation as Gellner—if he did not exploit the distinction everywhere it is because he was never indiscriminate. He used to say that the fatal mistakes in a work of

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philosophy are to be found between the lines of the first page. Gellner's book, which makes no reservations, can be recommended without any to the reader who wants the mistakes put on the line—and the issues spelled out in black and white.

GELLNER's refutation of the paradigm case argument is meant to liberate us from the conceptual conservatism of the Oxford philosophers. And Gellner's reasons for wanting to achieve this result seem to derive from his notion that conceptual conservatism implies political conservatism. I believe this argument to rest on nothing more elevated than a pun. But the argument is necessary if Gellner is to transform the intellectual debate between the Linguistic Philosopher and the Traditional Philosopher into a social struggle between the Establishment and the Angry Young Man. Gellner reports, what is quite true, that many of the linguistic philosophers "feel in their bones" that common sense is right as against philosophical paradox. But Gellner, exploiting a dubious epistemological distinction between bones and hearts, assures us "that in our hearts we know full well [that] we do not know whether people have feelings, whether we are free to choose our aims, whether induction is legitimate, whether morality is truly binding or merely illusory, etc." I do not choose to question Gellner's reasons of the heart (reasons of a type that have often supported the most conservative political positions), but it might be useful to point out that some common-sense philosophers might well turn the argument back on Gellner. If we do not know that other people have feelings (still worse, if we do not feel it in our hearts), then isn't the conviction which lies at the basis of most liberal and radical thought, that we must relieve men of their pain and suffering, in extreme jeopardy? If we do not have any rational reason to believe that people are in pain, do we have any rational reason to attempt to relieve them of it? The suggestion that "conceptual" conservatism implies "political" conservatism is plainly ridiculous (as the leftish politics of many linguistic philosophers might have suggested).

There is no doubt that linguistic philosophy has given an absurdly narrow definition to philosophy and its problems, but it has, I think, made remarkable contributions to the discussion of a number of them. And, for those interested in philosophy (Gellner's derogation of *l'art pour l'art* indicates that he may not be one of them), this fact must be of more permanent interest than the fact, if it is a fact, that some of the fellow-travelers of the movement are smug, unintelligent, upper class, superciliously apolitical, unhistorical, and anti-scientific, and hold positions which might be better held by philosophers teaching at the London School of Economics.

Facets of American Civilization

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION. By MALDWYN ALLEN JONES. University of Chicago Press. 359 pp. $6.00.

AMERICAN LABOR. By HENRY PELLING. University of Chicago Press. 247 pp. $5.00.

AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY. By ROBERT H. BREMNER. University of Chicago Press. 230 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN GLAZER

THESE three books are the most recent additions to the Chicago History of American Civilization, which has been imaginatively, even brilliantly, edited by Daniel Boorstin. It is only with the present three volumes that it becomes possible to see clearly Professor Boorstin's over-all scheme.

The earlier volumes dealt for the most part with single periods of the country's history (*The Birth of the Republic: 1763–89; The Nation Takes Shape: 1789–1837; The Response to Industrialism: 1885–1914; The Perils of Prosperity: 1914–32; The New Age of Franklin Roosevelt: 1932–1945; The Price of Power: America since 1945*). While the authors were well chosen (they include, for example, Marcus Cunliffe, William Leuchtenberg, and Dexter Perkins), and these brief accounts of relatively short periods in American history were useful, one had, in effect, a multi-volumed history of the United States—well written and well edited, to be sure. But one did not yet see a history of American civilization.

From the beginning, the chronological volumes were accompanied with "topical volumes . . . [dealing] with the history of

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varied and significant aspects of American life." But on the basis of the subjects of the first few of these volumes (*American Judaism* and *American Catholicism,* by Nathan Glazer and John Tracy Ellis, respectively, and more recently, histories of the *War for Independence* and *The Mexican War,* and *American Folklore* by Richard Dorson), it was legitimate to suppose that the subjects in the topical group were to be somewhat accidentally chosen.

And indeed, an extension of the normal scope of history—from politics, and more recently, economics, to all of "civilization"—attractive as it is, has always created great problems for American historians. Historians realized forty years ago that the emphasis in their writings on political factors, a chronological treatment, an exclusive concern with the raw material usually dealt with (written sources of some significance—state papers, letters, memoirs), ignored a great deal of what was equally important for history. In the course of this historical revolution, it was possible to incorporate effectively economic factors—but when the historian wrote "social history," when he tried to get beyond the clear skeletal structure given by political events, and the somewhat less clear but still satisfying guidance offered by economic statistics and a growing number of well-trained economic historians, he found himself overwhelmed by the terrible complexity of American society, with its classes and statuses—if they are that—its vast variety of ethnic groups, its profusion of voluntary organizations, its varied levels of culture. What *was* he to do if he wanted to write social history, or take into account social factors? What he generally did was to present a pastiche of interesting facts and, hopefully, significant ones. American historians, in their attempt to extend the writing of history outside the boundaries set by politics and economics, have generally not done better than a somewhat academic version of *Only Yesterday.*

The problem was only complicated by the rise of what we may call institutional history. On the one hand, business firms and universities, philanthropic foundations and social work organizations, wanted to have their histories written: who else but historians should they call upon? And from the historian's point of view, this was not simply a response to a patron with money. For if we have had periods of American history in which political factors were paramount, and periods in which economic factors were paramount, we can well argue that the present age is one in which institutional and organizational factors were never more important—they sometimes even appear to overwhelm the political and economic ones. And yet to write good institutional history meant to have a sense of something which barely existed even among those who were supposed to be professionally expert about it—a sense of the structure of American society.

THE problems are indeed enormous, and I do not wish to suggest that with the three present volumes we can say "solved." Rather, to my mind, the books reflect a new level of consciousness of the range of material that must be incorporated into American history, and, more important, of the perspectives from which this new material must be approached. Two of these volumes (*American Labor* and *American Immigration*) are rather more successful than the third (*American Philanthropy*); certainly this must reflect in part the fact that we have a body of decent work on both labor and immigration, so that the authors were able to do more than introduce a preliminary order into the material in a virgin field. Equally important, I think, in the success of Mr. Pelling's and Mr. Jones's books is the ability of the authors (they are both English) to communicate to the readers a sense of the main features of American society so that their subjects appear solidly based on central realities, rather than existing, as special histories so often do, in some vacuum. There is no better indication of Mr. Pelling's ability than the fact that his book, which must have been finished some time ago, offers all the background necessary to the understanding of the current conflict in organized labor over the Negroes. His book is consciously a history of American *labor,* American workers, rather than of the labor movement, but we learn more about the labor movement from it than we might from a more narrowly focused volume. As a historian of labor, he cannot ignore (as so many histories of the labor movement have) the great body of work-

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ers that was brought here involuntarily and is still not accepted in large parts of the labor movement. He describes them as slaves; he discusses the problem of incorporating them into the body of free labor after emancipation; he points out how the special organizational features of the various movements to organize workers have affected the position of Negroes. The emphasis on American labor means an emphasis on its sources and types, and on immigration, both voluntary and involuntary. The perspective thus given throws light on the history of the American labor movement and the features of labor organization.

Mr. Pelling's book is unfortunately too short; and he says too little about the changes introduced into American society by the pattern of national collective bargaining—changes both in the nature of the economy, and in the life of the factory workers.

Mr. Jones's *American Immigration* is a completely admirable book, and not too short. It makes excellent use of the large body of good research that has recently been produced in immigration history, and it is subtle in its understanding of such complicated matters as the shifting tides of American feeling and opinion on immigration. It is a tightly written book, and behind almost every sentence lies solid research and good thinking. It is, in fact, the best example of the kind of book the Chicago History of American Civilization is aiming at, and one imagines how wonderful a series would be made up of ten or twenty such volumes. A satisfying capstone to the whole row of good books in immigration history, it is, to my mind, the most useful volume in the field.

Mr. Bremner's *American Philanthropy* has had less to build on, and is less satisfying. It may seem self-serving for a specialist on ethnic groups to point out that ethnic factors play almost no role in Mr. Bremner's book (there is no item in the index under "Immigration" or "Immigrants"). And yet I think there is no question that the division of the American people into different ethnic and racial elements is as important for the understanding of its past and present as its division into classes and statuses. One is left often, in this book, with the feeling that there is no social scene surrounding the events Mr. Bremner describes. Whom, one asks, were these Charity Organization Societies in the big cities in the late 19th century advising and helping? How did their clientele affect their work, and their attitudes? Where was misery concentrated—among what types, what social elements, and how did this govern the development of philanthropy and social work? Nor is there any discussion of the peculiar development of social services along religious lines.

But whatever their varying degrees of success, one receives from all three books an exciting idea of how the history of American civilization can be presented. In the past, when one looked at a history of American education, or a history of social work, one took it for granted that it had been written by and for professional educationists and social workers. And yet these and other specialized institutions do form part, and an increasingly important part, of the whole fabric of American civilization. They demand the same broad view, knowledge, training, and sophistication that have been devoted to problems of American political and economic history, and which people working entirely within special institutional areas have found it difficult to develop. The Chicago History of American Civilization helps place such subjects more firmly in the broad stream of knowledge which educated people think of as American history.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

RICHARD L. SCHOENWALD, appearing here for the first time, is an assistant professor of history in the department of humanities at M.I.T.

GEORGE L. MOSSE, another new contributor, is the author of *The Struggle for Sovereignty.*

LEWIS A. COSER reviewed Reinhard Bendix's *Max Weber* in the May issue.

ELMER BORKLUND teaches English at Cornell University; this is his first contribution.

MARSHALL COHEN, also making his first appearance, teaches philosophy at Harvard.

NATHAN GLAZER, who reviews for COMMENTARY regularly, is the co-editor (with Davis McEntire) of *Studies in Housing and Minority Groups.*

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"THE RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTSIA"

is the Summer 1960 issue of

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THE ISSUE [*continued from page (a)*]

principles and procedures, but since when has it been "generally accepted" for the victors in a war to bring the vanquished to trial? And I fail to see why he should denounce the Israelis for "presuming" to judge Eichmann when he applauds a similar presumption by the Allies at Nuremberg—who, unlike the Israelis, were themselves guilty of acts in World War II that could legitimately be called crimes, such as the saturation bombing of Berlin by Anglo-American forces, the dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by our own country, and the atrocities committed by Russian soldiers throughout East Europe.

There are occasions when it is fitting and proper that a man disqualify himself as the exponent of a principle, for he discredits the principle by sacrificing certain personal feelings to it that for *him,* if for no one else, ought to be more sacred than any idea of abstract justice. Mr. Birnbaum (in "Letters to the Editor") is very angry with me for being unkind to the young father who pleaded publicly for understanding of the boy who had assaulted and murdered his four-year-old daughter the day before. Yet that young father is one example of the impropriety I have been talking about. Another, in my opinion, are the Jews who have vociferously protested against Mayor Wagner's refusal to let Rockwell speak in New York. There are many good arguments against trying to silence Rockwell, but isn't there something distasteful in the spectacle of Jews going out of their way to defend his right to preach the extermination of the Jews?

Which brings me to the final point of Professor Handlin's letter—the question of whether Israel, by virtue of being a Jewish state, is obliged to act more nobly than all other nations. I too "would like to think" that the demand of nobility Jews often press on themselves has more to do with the honoring of "transcendent moral obligations" than with the psychology of defensiveness and self-hatred. Unfortunately, the evidence seems to me all too clearly in favor of the latter hypothesis. And since I believe the motive so often to be impure, I cannot always take the demand at face value. Besides, I do not share Professor Handlin's assumption that nobility necessarily consists in sacrificing natural feelings to an abstract principle. Was Euthyphro noble when, convinced that piety lay in applying the principles of justice without regard for personal considerations, he prosecuted his own father for murder? Socrates and Plato, at any rate, had their doubts.—N.P.

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